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The Taskmasters

George K. Turner



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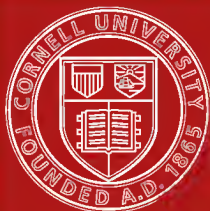
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THE TASKMASTERS

*"I am of the opinion, upon the whole, that the manufacturing aristocracy, which is growing up under our eyes, is one of the harshest which ever existed in the world. * * * The friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in this direction; for if ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrate into the world, it may be predicted that this is the gate by which they will enter."*

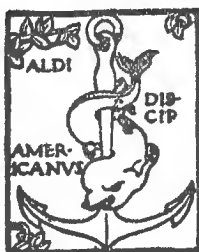
DE TOCQUEVILLE, 1835.

The Taskmasters

By

George Kibbe Turner

First Novel



Series



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THE TASKMASTERS

Chapter I

THE HEIR APPARENT

THERE are giants among these hills of ours, if you will but stop and consider them; colossal figures striding up and down; such stuff, it seems to me, as mankind made their demi-gods of three thousand years ago. You know those feudal barons of the medieval days—how the cliffs of Europe bristled with their turrets and their battlements. Great, fierce, unforgotten forms, we see them yet, each in his stronghold on his crag, glowering down those ancient valleys. How different was that old hill country then from ours? Times have changed, indeed, but men have not; and to some of us, at least, strange resemblances seem to arise.

First there were the iron hills of New England, which stand about us now, unconquered to this day. A century and a half, the poor hill farmer, his life hideous in its dreariness and sterility, scratched painfully at this meagre soil, indifferent to the last to his feeble persuasion. It was not for him the Almighty Carver of the Universe had hollowed out these val-

leys and sent their little rivers roaring down their rocks and falls, but for a vastly different type of men. A century and a half of little things! Then in the great marching purposes of God, the predestined time of preparation had been fulfilled, and the first manufacturer came into his own.

And now for over half a century this race has ruled here—father, son, and grandson; just and unjust, wise and foolish, virtuous and profligate. They have called together the strange and uncouth peoples from the ends of the earth; they have cried afar, and the hungry generations of the old world have come tramping to the new; they have established and laid out towns and cities; they have led up railroads through an empty land; they have made this barren place the workshop of the world.

Here to this day they sit and frown, each in his corner of the valley, each in his slate-roofed house, upon its little eminence, staring across to his many-windowed mill, with the unknown creatures of his making huddled down beneath him. And the reek of their chimneys rises like the smoke of far volcanoes, and the roar and chatter and jargon of their machinery mounts up to high heaven between the stiff and ragged hill tops like the hoarse songs of the Titans, busy building a new world. Is it nothing to have turned the lives of a hundred thousand men; to have changed the tracing of the map? Is it nothing to control the government of a state; to compel the policies of a nation? These men are great, I say; some day their lives will be declared as they really are, and there will

be need of a great, strong, clear and steady voice to call through their deeds and their misdeeds.

Of all these one hundred thousand people in our valley, in all these fifty years, there are not more all told than threescore names; all the rest are creatures of the great black herd, hardly entitled to an individuality of their own. But everyone, down to the last dim-minded Pole, knows of these half hundred names of ours. John Case and Joel Belcher and Seth Mayhew—these are gone, and their huge, barbaric granite monuments stand forth in the forefront of our graveyards to tell what manner of men they were. Then there were Elisha Dibble, he too is dead, and Adoniram Pitkin, poor old snuffer that he has become,—once he was clothed with his brief authority as a god, before he fell, dragging down his hundreds with him. And of to-day there are John Carnochan of Chichester and William Henry Harrison Thorndike, master of these great mills of Ellington. And back of all, seldom seen and never heard, sits Morgan Black, silent in his dark house at Grimdale—the unseen power, the destiny behind the clouds. Above him, at the head of the bare valley, rises the strangely-fashioned bulk of Mt. Totec, a huge altar on the horizon line. Over it the vague wisps of smoke from his thick chimneys underneath hang like perpetual grey incense upon the northern sky.

The valley of Stark county, like nearly all the others of the state, goes north and south, a great gutter in the rocks, pent up on either side by its long procession of rough and formless hills, and through it runs the

little river Totec, from which it has its name—fifty years ago as clear and green as when the Indians first found it; but now full from brink to brink with the floating abominations of our mills. Generally it runs smooth and full and dimpling along the narrow meadows, but here and there it breaks into quick, little fretful falls, and in these spots the towns have been laid out.

This little sordid principality here, the small city, Ellington, is William Thorndike's. Above, his great house sits upon the hill, the houses of the small company of his own race behind it; below, the working people herd upon the flat, the dingy main street drawn before them at the bottom of the hill; and on the other side, along the little river front, the Mayhew cotton mills stretch their forbidding length, an ugly barrier of raw, red brick, encircling half the place. This one institution dominates us all; three-quarters of the population have their living from it directly. Its hoarse calls first wake in the dim early day the heavy workers from their sodden sleep; the last light of the sun glares red upon the shining broadside of its thousand windows; and beyond the natural boundaries of day, in the early evenings of winter and late fall, the farmer going home upon the hills sees its long blaze of white electric glory like a giant jewel in the night, eclipsing all the other lights of the dark valley. It seems sometimes, with its towers and its chimneys, and its great outstretched length, like some unnatural monster, crouched along beside the town; some huge malevolent being, possessing instead of being pos-

sessed, its swarms of weary slaves crawling back day after day, year after year, to its service, until they are disgorged at last, to die, while others, born and reared meantime, crowd in to take their place.

The Mayhews built this great, square house upon the hill; John Avery Mayhew was born here. He sees the place as if it were yesterday—the heavy fence with its massive wooden urns, the stiff, unlighted gas lamps by the walks, the Roman soldier in the fountain, the snow-white line of stones, which marches up the driveway. He stands upon the edges of the solitary yard and sees, with a child's fear in his eyes, the dark figures in the yellow alleys of The Patch, that place of crooked shanties, the home of that strange, new, chattering folk, the Irish. Pigs trot grotesquely in the paths and at one end a black goat is tethered. At evening the men come slouching home, he hears the strident sound of fiddle and accordion, and sometimes in the summer nights when it is still—so still that you hear across the silent town the distant pounding of the water underneath the dam—the dreaded sound of keening comes through the open window to his lonely room—the awful calling for the dead, shrill heathen eldritch, wild with the fear of unimagined things. Never, while he lives, will they die from his memory—those horrid piteous outbursts of barbaric grief, come down who knows what long-forgotten centuries from nameless Druid graves.

.How sad his whole childhood seems. He sees his white and stern-faced mother by her window-side, looking, always looking, as it seemed to him, for some-

thing or someone that was to come. Then she was gone forever. He sees his silent father, with his set, strained face, haggard and preoccupied. In the yard old Pat, the man, that strange, unsocial, unfathomable being, with his chin upon his chest, goes shuffling and mumbling about his work. Occasionally there is another figure, a visitor a little younger than himself, an odd, small animal named Ruth, with a mane of dark curls upon her back, great dark, sober eyes, and awkward, little foolish skirts bobbing stiffly about the upper edges of her knees.

But more than all else beside there comes back to him the sense of the gloom and depression of the big, dark silent house. Everything is dark, it seems to him, hopelessly dark, with a certain settled, dreary atmosphere of its own. The woodwork is black, the furniture is black, the carpets dark and soft, the painted ceilings vastly high. He hesitates upon the threshold of the big front parlour! Two beams of moated sunshine pouring through chinks in the closed inside blinds, glower in little spots on the floor; all else is dim. There is the coloured marble mantel-piece, the green carpet with wreaths of great pink flowers; (Query: where do such monstrous roses grow?) the marble-topped centre table, the black walnut what-not, the fringed canopies on the high windows, the ghostly chairs with their linen shrouds standing in mute, stiff, awful congress about the rooms, the paintings of a ruin in some unnatural foreign land, black, and green and deep angry red; and last of all, the lofty mirrors

in their black and gilt frames facing each other on either side of the dark room. A small face peering in at one corner, sees reflected back and forth, a thousand twilight rooms with high ground-glass chandeliers; a thousand childish figures in endless procession down these dim, glassy corridors that fade away and disappear into the dusk.

Come, let us leave this unearthly place, and go upstairs. But upstairs is the great, west bedroom, that terrible chamber with its big, black bedstead, with the purple canopy, and the immense oil portraits of his grandparents—the one with his long black beard, the other with her curls, staring in weird and grave significance at one another across the silence. Certainly this is the house of mysteries. Upstairs again is the vacant attic, and above that still the odd and eerie glass room of the cupola; the cupola, blue and yellow and white, from its many coloured windows. High above the mills and the railroad and the valley and the serpent river, winding down and away and out of sight—here is the one place for the establishment of a far, solitary eminent domain. The only practical difficulty offered is the attic—that great, dim, wooden cave, with its strange, dry smells, full of grey chaos and furtive, rustling, crouching sounds and uncaused creakings that no human intellect could explain, turning three times about the edge of the house and ending suddenly in a horrible blind corner, by the rough brick wall of a chimney. Many a time the boy and girl, forming an offensive and defensive alliance,

scamper by the entrance of this den to the attractive cupola; occasionally, with creeping flesh, he ventures to steal up here alone.

He mounts again in memory to the place. This one, it seems, is fair Rosamond, the enchantress; and this is Sindbad, the bold sailor, vastly, most desperately temerarious. And there below is the hideous den of the Forty Thieves, which but to mention is to shudder.

But there is another myth, a mystery of their own, which he remembers best of all—a man's odd name, caught from chance snatches of low household conversation, someone who comes and goes unseen and never must be spoken of. Here in the cupola the children sit and exchange dire confidences on him unheard.

How vividly those scenes come back—one in particular. It is a melancholy early summer day; the gusty east wind spits the grey rain spitefully against the window panes to wriggle down in tortuous channels to the sash. The conversation naturally turns to dark and grewsome things, dread childish speculations, uncanny creatures come forth from Arabian folk-lore or dim Celtic superstitions, whispered to the children of New England by the peasantry of Ireland; and then it comes again to that vague and awful person, Richard Plimsoll.

"He's gone away again," the small girl says.

"How do you know?"

"I heard my father say so."

A little silence intervenes.

"And you didn't see him this time either," the boy says accusingly.

"No, I couldn't; I tried to, all the time."

"I'd a seen him.

"How?"

"I'd lie awake nights and listen."

"I *do*," the girl says earnestly.

"And didn't you ever hear him at all?"

"Once I thought I did—a little."

Another thoughtful silence.

"It *scares* me," she says, "to have him come and go like that—just like a ghost."

"Maybe he *is* a ghost," says the boy. "Maybe he's a ghost," he continues, elaborating his comfortable theory, "that lives in your house sometimes and that's why they always talk so low about him—they're afraid, because they know he's comin' or he's there."

"Please don't," says the small girl shuddering.

"Did you ever think," the boy goes on, "you heard anybody in *your* house?"

"No, did you?"

"Sometimes I do—queer noises—down there, as if something lived there."

"O, don't," the girl says sharply, the quick tears springing to her eyes.

A lone wasp buzzes up the window pane, the east wind rattles the loose sash, the rain drums wearily on the flat roof. From below of a sudden comes a strange sound, distinctly, unmistakably from the attic.

"Did you hear it?"

"Yes!"

"Maybe something *is* there and it's heard you."

"Who's afraid of it," the boy says, advancing to the open stairway and half calling down; "I'm not."

"Neither am I," says the second small being, bristling with nervous courage.

Nevertheless it seems better to withdraw. They go down together, eyes fixed on the yellow attic door; together they turn down the second stairs, stiff, erect, with that awful feeling of suspense in the rigid back and neck:—

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on
And no more turns his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

Strange, he thinks sometimes, how this one fiction of a child's imagination has persisted in his mind; and yet, of course, it was not so singular, after all. Certainly it is not surprising that he sees that other picture with such crystal clearness of detail.

It happens just before he has come down to breakfast. Strangers are in the house; he hears the shuffle of men's feet bearing something heavy up the front stairs, and, passing down the other stairway, he sees the empty dining room. A newspaper sprawls out upon the floor, a coffee cup is overturned upon the fresh white table cloth and the smell of stale coffee fills the room. The solitary boy, thrust aside by the feverish activity of the moment, stands staring out of

the window into the stiff yard, caught by a terror that he cannot understand. His father has been stricken with paralysis at his early breakfast time; he will never speak to him again.

Then comes the closing of it all—the crowds in the high rooms, the melancholy voices that come up the stairs to where he sits upon the second floor, the line of black and shining carriages upon the drive. And then a little later he has left the old dark house himself and is with his aunt, and somehow the small girl is living where he used to live. Something besides his father's death has happened for the boy. The great property of Seth Mayhew has been found dwindled down to nothing at his death and his partner, William Thorn-dike rules in his stead over the Mayhew cotton mills.

Chapter II

THE MONSTER

NOW here was John Avery Mayhew, A. B., in the year of our Lord 188—, a man,—or shall I say a boy?—with straight-forward eyes a determined New England face, and a strong impression that a great deal must be done in a very short time, and that he himself must be engaged in doing it. First of all, according to the formula of the provincial newspaper, he was “the product of our local schools”—the great democratic American schools, the motley, turbulent, fighting schools of Ellington; and there, in the dingy, chalky school room, in the bare, gravelled recess yard, in the packs of infant savages howling home along the streets late afternoons,—the sense of common justice and the recognition that every human thing that God stands up and sets moving across this world is an individual, with rights and possibilities and feelings of its own, was ground and pounded into his childish soul.

Then there were the years of college. If he brought nothing home from them which he could exactly inventory, as he acknowledged to himself with some regret, you could see the changes in him very clearly

—a little in his face, something in the muscles laid upon his thighs and back by his baseball and boxing; in his clothes, and manner and speech, and that quality of moral enthusiasm, which every honest boy whether he admits it or not, takes with him from his education—a belief that here, at this moment of time, great social movements have begun, in which he is in a manner pledged to take his part.

After these three years home again, he was little changed—still slender and elastic and rather tall, still with something of a flush about his cheek bones; still, I am inclined to think, a little too enthusiastic—flighty, you might almost call it from the more noble vantage ground of middle age; ready to waste entirely too much fire in the discussion and pursuit of a moral conviction.

Yet there was a somewhat soberer look in his face for these last years, these three years spent in grinding at the law in the soiled and dingy chambers of the late Spencer Pratt—spent grudgingly, for economy's sake and the sake of his own independence, though other men were away at law school, and others still had made their start in life, while he stayed here, shut in behind these dusty windows, marking time.

And now in this mid-July afternoon, John Avery Mayhew had been admitted to the Bar. He sat with his notification in his hand, at the old, ink-stained green-topped walnut desk. There was something of pleasure in his thoughts; something of foreboding. He had come at last to the critical time, he stood alone on the awful threshold of the world. Many may prate

of birth and death and the pursuit of the love of woman. Yet this one stony-eyed Crisis is looked at once at least by every man and overshadows all the rest. Once at least he feels it—the horror of the great hostile city, the fear of this hungry generation of men, with whom he was brought struggling into the world; the wonder where he can find his place, alone, unaided, unknown; where he can shoulder his way, with untried strength into this jostling crowd and establish himself—if indeed he can expect to do so at all. Upon the hazard of this awful fight hangs every plan and hope and purpose; every moral asset you possess, down to the last shred of self respect. Or so it seems, at least, to a boy. I sometimes think the menace of this thing affects our men more than most; we are so near the bare, clanking machinery of life. You see it in their eyes and faces—in the hard-visaged superintendents and overseers and the sharp-faced young men learning the mill business—a mirthlessness and a sort of silent terror lest by some misstep they be thrust back and be trampled down in the black crowd underneath.

For half an hour perhaps, he sat there thinking of it all. Then suddenly he raised his chin from his hands, threw back his thick hair from his forehead, and started to get up. A new thought had struck him. There was something else happening on that night—the dedication of the new mill; and Ruth Thorndike would be there, back again from school and a long vacation time in Europe. He had seen her very little these last few years.

We mark our time in a way by the dates of the opening of our new mills. "That happened," a resident will tell you, "the year No. 2 was built." In the iron reign of William Henry Harrison Thorn-dike, that genius in mill operation, there were many milestones. But none of all he built were greater than the No. 8—that huge thing of brick, whose floors contain the surface of a farm—acres, almost square miles—and never before or since has come such a celebration as at its opening.

There it stood, the future temple of Noise and Toil and Hurry, still spotless, still silent, with the last sound of the workmen's hammer echoing through its emptiness. The week had been dedicated to preparation for the event; a regiment of men, running in and out, dragged small groves of hemlock trees, literal miles of bunting to make the decorations, huge piles of timbers to build the platforms for the great band. And now, nearly closing time in the mills, there was a sense of expectancy in the place; the farmers' teams had begun to gather on the streets; the band had come from the city, the speaker had arrived, the guests had been driven up from the station, and already, although it was still broad day, early lights had begun to appear in the dark house on the hill, and the pale white gleam of electricity showed from the windows of the new factory.

Mayhew walked down the steep, narrow, dirty-plastered stairway of the old block and stood in the street door. As he did so, he recognised two young men in a dog-cart drawn up before Conniff's new

store. They were J. Chippendale Merriman of Grimdale and Talcott Lynde—two acquaintances—fellows who had been in his own class at college. He saw them without much enthusiasm. Merriman he liked, as everybody did, as happy friendly, chirruping a little chap as ever lived. Lynde he detested. He was an extreme type of the college aristocracy—those figures in tan top hats you see sauntering through the college campus trailed by their bull terriers, a peculiar class, set apart—who do absolutely nothing, either in athletics or scholarship, but who nevertheless establish an esoteric standard, known and severely insisted upon by themselves, which apparently graduates the value of human life according to the size of one's tailor and livery bills; those men, in short, who are introducing into the free democracy of our American colleges year after year, the spirit of Caste, the taint of pseudo English views and manners and the cheap insolence of the family check book.

It was too late now, however, to escape recognition, if he had wanted to. Little Merriman had already seen him and was calling his tall companion's attention to him.

"Hello," he said, in his high childish voice, "here's Jackie Mayhew.

"How de do, how de do," he said effusively, reaching over the high dog-cart to shake hands.

"How de do," said Lynde gruffly, with a short nod.

The two exchanged stiff handshakes.

"Well, where are you now—still here?" said Lynde, the gracious conversationalist.

"Yes."

"Studying law, aren't you, Mayhew?" interjected Chippy Merriman.

"Yes, I was just admitted to the Bar to-day."

"Glad to hear it," said Chippy.

"Were you? that's good," vouchsafed Lynde.

"Well, see you later," said Merriman. "We've got to get up to the Thorndikes now. You'll be down at the mill to-night, of course?"

Lynde, having lighted his cigarette, nodded a silent good-bye, and the two drove off.

It was somewhat late when Mayhew arrived at the festival; the concert was just closing and the last blare of the band was sounding through the whitewashed hall. As he pushed his way to the platform of the guests, he heard the silvery-voiced orator, an imported notability from another state, beginning his solemn-faced congratulatory speech.

The noted speaker was proud of his country—he did not deny it—proud of "her rocks and rills, her woods and templed hills," proud of her past, of her future destiny among the nations. And you of New England, he could not help thinking of it as he sat here to-night, what a proud heritage is yours; New England, home of the Pilgrim and Puritan, cradle of liberty, mother of states and men, who would not be proud of her lofty traditions, her high intelligence and purpose, her great forward strides in industry. It was the present wonder among nations, and he devoutly thanked his God for it, this great industrial progress of New England under the wise policies of

our great government. And he hoped it would not be amiss, here among friends, to speak what his heart prompted him, to point out how much of this prosperity—these comfortable homes, and higher wages—development morally and intellectually—was due to the beneficent guidance of our grand republic during the past twenty years, to the careful forethought of our fellow citizens, who represent us at Washington; due as many of us *must* think, to the great American policy of safeguarding the American workman.

His eye passed proudly as he said it over the foreign faces beneath—the Horde, densely crowded, at the edges of the hall, half incapable of consecutive English speech, embarrassed, agape, only dimly conscious, seemingly, of the meaning of this occasion they had their part in.

On the platform behind him sat the rulers of the herd, raised over them. Directly back, in the first row, was William Henry Harrison Thorndike, the master of the mill, his long arms folded on his breast—tall, dark, silent, iron-grey, with the deep straight marks slanting down beneath his nose at either side of his hard mouth, and stubby black moustache; a morose, sleepless intelligence, whose melancholy eyes ranged slowly back and forth across the scene beneath him. Beside and behind him were the rest, John Carnochan, and Adoniram Pitkin, and all the others, and their children and their children's families; and, half obscured in the background, as always—the grey bushy beard and rugged figure of Morgan Black,

motionless in his hard, uncomfortable seat. Besides there sat the figures of the magnificent Mrs. Miranda Dibble—in purple and diamonds, and fine raiment; and her daughter Pomona, in green silk, directly in front of him—the eye did not pass these lightly by.

The last smooth tones of the speaker's voice died out in the hall; a quick patter of applause came from the platform; a few of those nearest on the floor, clerks and overseers and their families, followed; out of the crowd at the edges of the hall came a confused and stupid clamour, in awkward imitation. Then the noise of the band burst forth again.

John Mayhew had come up beneath the platform several moments before, and stood there looking up. Ruth Thorndike had come back—there were few in the hall who had not noticed that. She sat in the front row, beside her father. She was dressed—let him think, does he still remember? Yes, and always will—in Something White—a pretty woman surely would not require a man's remembering more than that; in Something White, rather close fitting, a little open at the neck, with a white knit head-covering slipped back upon her shoulders. Her face was flushed with youth and the excitement of the time. Glints of pleasure shone in her bright, dark eyes. No man could doubt that one at least was enjoying this occasion.

The company on the platform was preparing for the grand march. Suddenly the glance of Miss Thorndike fell on Mayhew's face below her. She gave

a little imperious motion for him to come up. When he had done so, she met him with a most severe expression on her face.

"What do you mean, John Mayhew," she exclaimed, "by coming here so late? I've been looking everywhere for you."

He went through his excuses.

"Well," she said, "I suppose I'll have to forgive you, but I don't like it."

"That's a nice way to meet a fellow," he complained, "after all this time you might at least shake hands."

The corners of her mouth went up; she laughed and extended her hand to him.

"Now I want you to come with me and meet my guest, Miss Gildersleeve."

The tall striking young woman in the elaborate dress to whom she led him, bowed and murmured her acknowledgment of the introduction. It seemed she did not care to enter the grand march, but had a languid desire to see it from the platform.

"You've never been in Ellington before?" asked Mayhew, when they had reached their seats.

"Yes, once, when I was a small child, but I've almost forgotten it now. I feel that I know it awfully well, though, because my father and Mr. Thorndike are such old friends."

The line had already begun to form, with William Thorndike and the wife of one of the overseers at the head. Behind them a little way, Ruth Thorndike and Lynde took their places. Back along the hall,

stiff, awkward, embarrassed,—the mill people edged, into the long line.

“Isn’t it *interesting!*” said the imported beauty looking about with supercilious loftiness, “I think it’s *so* wonderful—all these *people*.”

The grand march, pompously piloted by the fat prompter with the small and delicately curled moustache, had begun to move. Gradually the step was taken up along the line and one by one of the couples went slowly by the stand—some robust and stolid; some heavy-footed, stooped and tired; some with a strange, swaggering assumption of indifference and ease. There came to Mayhew, looking down the hall, a memory of a thing he had read in college—a saying of an old aristocratic social philosopher of another time—“The people; it is a beast.” There it was before him in the flesh—the beast, the monster, sullen, inarticulate, dimly conscious—writhing its great length in and out around the hall.

“It looks like a big snake, doesn’t it?” he said phrasing his thought most awkwardly.

“Perhaps it does,” said the young woman, “I had not thought of it.

“Aren’t their faces *awful?*” she continued, “so hard, so revolting, don’t you think? You know I can’t stand having them even look at me; and yet it is so fascinating—all this place here, you know. I think it’s *wonderful* what Mr. Thorndike has done here.”

Gradually the spectacle lost its engrossing interest for her.

"Let me see," she said, "you were in college with some of my friends, I think. You knew Courtney Matthews, didn't you?"

"O yes, he was in my class," he said and stopped. Matthews was another of the Lynde class whom he especially avoided.

"He's such a clever fellow, and he's doing so well. He's in with his father, you know."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"And of course you knew Talcott Lynde?"

"O yes, I knew him quite well. Did you meet him first to-night?"

"O no, I met him last summer. We were on a yachting cruise together—a whole lot of young people. We had a perfectly charming time. They all thought Mr. Lynde was splendid. He was awfully popular in college, wasn't he?"

Lynde popular! He thought. "Why yes," he said, with as much enthusiasm as he could muster. "I think they liked him."

"And you knew the Bigelowes, of course," she said, mentioning one of the rich resident families of the college town.

"No, I never happened to meet them," he said.

"Why, how queer, I supposed *everybody* knew them."

The Lofty One became a trifle less communicative. John Mayhew did his best to entertain her, with less and less success.

"Did you, indeed, I should think it would have been

very interesting," she said every now and then abstractedly. There were larger pauses in the talk; try as he would he might not penetrate that little charmed circle of prejudice, of gowns and girls and men and horses in which her mind revolved.

"Isn't that Lynde and Ruth across the hall?" she asked, leaning over, "They seem to be having such a good time," she remarked unconsciously. "He's such a jolly fellow. They say he has no end of money." She became more and more abstracted. It was with the greatest pleasure in life he saw the grand march come to a close, and Talcott Lynde arriving to relieve him.

"Miss Thorndike asked me to say that she would like to see you below the platform," he said to Mayhew.

He escaped with the greatest haste compatible with decency.

As he came down to her, Ruth Thorndike's clear, frank eyes were on his face, scrutinising it. She smiled when he caught her. There was something about this girl's smile—so candid, and straightforward, and friendly—that no man could feel ill at ease with her. The blundering swain, thoroughly chagrined by his unsuccessful court to the Impossible One, became a man again.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, John," she said, sliding along with a little quick motion on the bare yellow bench on which she sat. "It doesn't seem as if I'd seen you for ages."

"You haven't, have you?" he said, standing up before her. "It's longer than that. So this is fair Rosamond?"

"And this is Sindbad, the terrible sailor. If we could only hear Richard Plimsoll approaching somewhere, the gathering would be complete."

They laughed together at the memory of the childish terror.

"But see here, young man," Ruth cried, "aren't you going to ask me to dance?"

"Why certainly I am—that is, if it's the right thing for you to do; out there in the crowd, you know," he said doubtfully.

"Of course it is, why shouldn't it be? Besides, I'm just dying to dance."

Suddenly the huge voices of the band broke into a great, exultant waltz; and in a moment these two had swung out on to the floor—two glad, young creatures, full of health and hope and the joy of living—filled with the deep inherited delight of the dance. Whence has it come to us, this fierce desire of the dance; from what far distant springs of our blood? Your grandfather's grandfather sent it down to you, and was scarce nearer to its source than you.

He was tall and elastic and slender then; and she light, not with the uncanny, eerie lightness of the fluffy woman, but more like some wild, free thing of the woods, dancing with every muscle in her happy young body. At last, after a long circuit of the hall, he led her flushed but still protesting that she was not tired, to a corner by the platform.

"So you are back again in Ellington for good," she said when they were seated.

"For good or bad."

"And what are you doing?"

"That's it; that's what you women always ask us poor slaves the first thing: what are you doing?"

"But really, John, what are you?"

He told her of his admission to the bar.

"That's splendid," she exclaimed, with her usual vivid enthusiasm. "And you start practicing right away—here, I suppose."

"Yes, I suppose so. My connections are all here, of course, and I'm going to try it, anyway."

"Yes," she said energetically; "more than that you're going to succeed. That's what a man's for, isn't it? Look at all this to-night—it's my father's success, or that's the way it seems to me. You don't know how proud I am of him and all he's done, John. Sometime we'll see you do something like it—only in your own way."

"Your father is a remarkable man," said Mayhew soberly, "we can't all be like him; and we can't all have the opportunity. Look at those people, for instance. What can they ever hope to become?"

She looked thoughtfully around the hall. Two girls came up out of the crowd and passed by them whispering.

"Ain't she lovely," said one. The other one shrugged her shoulders defiantly. She was a rather tall, pale girl with red hair, dressed in plain black.

"Who wouldn't be?" she answered.

Ruth Thorndike heard them and flushed; she glanced pityingly at their poor little finery, as they moved away. "Poor girls," she said, half to herself.

"But it's different with you," she said, "you'll have your chance."

Suddenly she smote the arm of the settee with her small fist.

"O, how I wish I were a man," she said, "to plan and fight and accomplish."

Suddenly there appeared, bearing around the corner of the platform, an element of danger—the god-like form of Reginald de Courtney Pitkin—the flower of our young manhood, only son of Adoniram Pitkin's old age, Colonel, by the grace of Morgan Black, on our governor's staff—all effulgent in gold lace and buttons.

Ruth Thorndike gave a little start backward.

"Sit forward and let me get behind you, John, quick. How I hate that man," she commented viciously.

It was too late; Colonel Pitkin, already suspicious, advanced with his customary swaggering nonchalance straight toward them.

"Hello," he said to Mayhew, nodding curtly.

"Now that's a nice way, Miss Ruth," he blustered.

"What?" she asked innocently.

"Running off here and hiding. I tell you, it looks kind of peculiar for the hostess of the evening, if you don't mind my saying so."

"They couldn't hide you that way, could they, Reggie?" she asked maliciously. "My, but aren't we grand?"

The shot had no effect upon this warlike breast.

"Well," he said seriously, "I started first to put on my ordinary togs. But then I said, no sir, I'll wear just what I would anywhere, and I think I was right. I tell you, Miss Ruth, you can laugh if you want to, but we owe something to these people at times like this just as much as you would to anyone else. That's the way I look at it," said the Grand Duke of Pitkin, gazing proudly at the multitude.

"O come," said Ruth Thorndike, "don't try to make us believe it's all duty that made you put on that lovely new uniform."

"That's all right," said the imperturbable young hero.

"But that ain't what I came up here for. I came to claim that quadrille you owe me."

"It's too late now, they've formed their sets."

"No, I've got a place waiting for you."

"But I'm awfully comfortable here," she said, impudently leaning back and gazing at him.

"Come now," said Colonel Pitkin. "You've bothered me enough, Miss Ruth, and you're keeping the others waiting."

"O, all right," sighed Miss Ruth, getting up and placing her hand on his arm.

"Can't I have another dance to-night?" said John Mayhew, breaking in.

"I'm afraid not," said Ruth, "we're going home very soon now. But you must come over and see me soon." She turned and smiled and nodded as she went away.

He watched them disappear into the crowd.

All at once, from the other direction Chippy Merri-man, the very pocket image of evening perfection, came hurrying along.

"Hello, Jockie," he said. "Seen Talcott Lynde anywhere? I want to see him awfully."

Just then his eye fell upon him dancing across the hall.

"O there he is," he said, "I'll have to wait till this dance is over."

"He's a great dancer, Jockie. I like to see him on the floor. He's a bully fellow, isn't he? I say, who's that tall girl dancing with him? O, that Miss Gildersleeve; ain't she a beaut, though? Well, see you later," said Chippy, pattering off again into the crowd.

Two other figures were coming toward him now—Thorndike and Adoniram Pitkin—seriously discussing the speaker of the evening.

"Good speech," commented Thorndike, laconically.

"He gave it to them straight," said Adoniram, enthusiastically.

"How'd you like it, young man?" said Thorndike to Mayhew?

"He's a good speaker, but I don't believe everything in his speech," said Mayhew.

"What's the matter with it?"

"O, I don't know."

"The tariff, I suppose. They taught you different from that in college, didn't they?"

"Yes," said Mayhew frankly, "they did."

"Well, that's all right; wait till you've been out a

while. You'll see the practical side of it, as the rest of us do. Come up and see us, sometime," he added as he walked away. "I'd like to talk it over with you."

"All right, Mr. Thorndike," laughed Mayhew, "I will."

The quadrille was well under way. The round prompter, heated to the yawning verge of apoplexy, stood on the platform, tearing his fat voice into shreds, bawling into the great room. The couples shuffled back and forth, or stood awkwardly waiting their turns; the green Irish boys, with their cuffs wandering down over the knuckles of their big swinging hands, the dapper Frenchmen, in grand toilet, posing, strutting, using their handkerchiefs and eyes; the merry Irish girls; the pale, pretty French girls; the awkward Poles, silent and downcast, or showing their red gums in great sudden laughs. The thing was growing tiresome; Mayhew made up his mind he would go home.

As he went down to the head of the bricklined stairway, he stopped. The couples passed and repassed him, going down to the huge feudal feast for the common herd, set in great mounds of food upon the second floor. There it was—the beast—the monster, the coarse, common people. There under his eyes, beneath the hiss of the electric lights, the great stupid multitude turned and twisted and gorged itself. A certain feeling of repugnance came into his mind, alongside of his deep, and cherished democratic ideals. He passed down the stairway—down by the soiled and dishevelled banquet hall, out into the damp night air.

As he walked away he turned and looked back at the white gleams of the great building. The shrill voices of a few small boys piped about the entrance; as he went along he heard the grunts and groanings of the big band across the soft stillness of the night.

Chapter III

THE GODS IN THE MACHINE

ON the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November we go through every year the sacred, inherited right of citizenship throughout our ancient state. Half a million of high-browed voters, more or less, reading their newspapers beneath the family lamp the long evenings of the long year, stalk solemnly to the polls, and solemnly they stalk away again under the fond impression they have elected another governor. For two months the Holy Self-Satisfaction of the New England voter has been enshrined and revered; and the tumult of the appeals has come up to it, the noise of the shouting of the orators, and the shrieks of all the press, from the great blatant *Morning Announcer* at the capital to the last faintly whimpering country weekly in the south-east corner of the state; square miles of logic and exclamation points. And now the Intelligent Voter approaches the fatal ballot box, stooped with the awful responsibility of American citizenship, and votes.

And yet, do you think that any one madly supposes that the matter is really settled at this time? There being but one party truly good, Reason necessarily

makes but one choice. This grand old state stands firmly with both feet on the platform of the republican party. And when the last orator has proudly pointed to the past and gazed with no slight confidence into the future, and the last sleepy ballot has been cast and the last bald-headed delegate has filed out of the republican state convention, the choice of every little officer of the state is already sure as the judgments of Jehovah.

So much is fixed and determined by the state convention. Then who, asks one peering still further back into the nature of things, has fixed the state convention? Who, it may be asked in return, would naturally fix it; who owns the newspapers, and hires the lawyers and pays the ministers' salaries, and doles out their daily bread to the great body of the people? There is only one—the manufacturer. The American game of politics is played by great and small. These men play it grandly; all the year they sit there surrounded by their little private courts, brooding these things out in their own domains; nodding their solemn heads together in conferences and parceling out the larger things equitably to themselves and their friends and their wives, relatives and their lawyers. And when at last the manufacturers march down from their valleys to the state convention they already know by heart all that is ordained to be accomplished, and already the supplicants for another year are lined up before them with their dishes in their hands.

I suppose it is no secret that William Henry Harrison Thorndike wanted to be governor in 188-; indeed

the newspapers mentioned him early in the year. He could have been congressman a half a dozen times, but he passed it on to younger men. The state legislature was not for such as he. For some years now he had been the national committeeman—the one natural ambition of a great manufacturer. No one could appreciate more than William Thorndike the wielding of this vast silent power of the god of the machine. But beyond this he wanted to be governor; a personal ambition he had had for years.

Morton, the present governor, had had his two years; and when they had got him his second term his friends had thanked them, with tears in their eyes, for giving him this one last year of public life. The lieutenant governor, Perkins, who might naturally be advanced, was impossible—an oily, artful politician of the middle class, who had already been allowed to go too far. It certainly looked like Thorndike's year.

But toward the last of July Thorndike began to have suspicions of what was going to occur. He drove up at night to the house of Morgan Black and asked him what these new things meant. Morgan Black heard him grimly, sitting in his black walnut library, with the orange light from his heavily shaded reading lamp upon his beard and mouth, and his eyes up in the shadow.

"It looks as if he was getting kind of willing for a third term," he said. "That wouldn't surprise anybody much; he always did want all he could grab. Then the newspapers are hinting at it down that way too; that looks as if they might try to do something."

I can get hold of it in two or three days. When I do I'll let you know."

Thorndike went back into his own court and waited. There was no doubt there as to what would happen. The editor of the little evening paper that he owned, the young congressman he had made, the police court judge he had chosen, the sharp-faced young technology graduate who was his chief reliance at the mill, all saw but one handwriting on the wall. But Thorndike was still restless.

On that night the three people sat in the library together, as they had been the past two weeks—William Thorndike studying the newspaper, Miss Elizabeth Gildersleeve reading the latest novel, Miss Ruth Thorndike playing her piano.

"Ahem," said a loud voice at the door.

"O dear," said Miss Ruth Thorndike, sharply wheeling around on the stool, and leaning her elbow upon the piano, "there's that tiresome old Mr. Pitkin."

No one in Ellington, nor in Stark county for that matter, can mistake that loud, portentous clearing of the throat, which announces the entrance of Adoniram Pitkin like the solemn blare of trumpets at the play. There he came by the maid, slowly, gravely turning his toes far out, like a duck, holding his old, square-crowned brown derby in his hand, with his stolid, puffy face, his glasses, his round, close, thin, grey beard, his old-fashioned collar full of hairy fatness, his flat, ready-made, black satin tie with the big horse-shoe pin, his limp, old, black coat and his dark, figured vest, stretched tent-like from the top of his chest to

the summit of his mound-like stomach. A fat, short, shabby man followed him, with a dingy overcoat, and a slight fringe on his trousers bottom; defects which were only partially obscured by the shining new silk hat held conspicuously in his right hand.

"O how do you do, Mr. Pitkin, gläd to see you," said Miss Hypocrite, rustling forward; thus fulfilling her well-known vow that "no-body should be stupid in her house, not if she could help it."

"This is the Rev. Mr. Simpson," said Mr. Pitkin pompously, introducing the man with the thick black moustache. The visitor extended a moist and flabby hand.

"And this is Miss Gildersleeve," said the hostess.

Miss Elizabeth Gildersleeve murmured.

"Now," said Mr. Pitkin, "I want to introduce you to the next governor of our state, William Thorndike."

"I'm sure we all hope so down our way," said the visitor, heartily.

"Mr. Pitkin is a little premature," said Thorndike, in a cold voice. "Won't you sit down?"

"Now I know you want to talk politics," said Ruth, "so we girls will leave you and give you a chance."

"No indeed, I protest, we can't allow that at all, young ladies," said the visitor with a pronounced clerical ogle. His whole figure went with his moustache—coarse features, a thick meaty trunk and a fleshly lower lip. His gallantry was ill timed. In reality they did want to be alone. Mr. Pitkin shuffled his feet.

"O may we stay? We'll be awfully good, won't we?" said Miss Ruth, turning with mischievous enthusiasm to her friend.

"Yes indeed," said the latter, languidly. Scenting social contamination in the air, she had clambered up on her pedestal again, and sat looking down with half closed eyes from that giddy height.

"This is the Mr. Simpson who preached the famous tariff sermon," announced Adoniram Pitkin. "He was in college with me."

"Is that so?" said Miss Ruth. "The sermon we've heard so much about?"

"Yes," said Mr. Pitkin.

"Isn't that interesting. You ought to tell us how you came to preach it."

The attention was most grateful to Mr. Simpson.

"There isn't much to say, young ladies," he remarked, thrusting forward his chest. "I just had my beliefs on that vital subject in American development and I gave them, that's all." Satisfaction exuded from every pore of his thick carcass; one could almost hear his purr. His self confidence became superb.

"I suppose you are still with the same church?" asked Miss Ruth.

"No, I left them last fall. We'd been bumping along together for six years, and we both needed a change. So one Sunday morning last fall I just got up in my pulpit and told 'em I guessed we'd better agree to disagree, and I'd get out. I believe in saying what you think, young ladies."

Miss Elizabeth Gildersleeve's dissatisfied upper lip

wrinkled more than ever; Miss Ruth Thorndike was apparently eating hers.

"Last fall," he continued, "I did some stumping for the party."

"Mr. Simpson is now a candidate for one of our consulships," announced Mr. Pitkin.

Then the doorbell rang again.

"We seem to be popular to-night," said Miss Ruth, getting up.

Adoniram Pitkin, taking advantage of the little disturbance, nudged his chair a little toward William Thorndike.

"As regards to Mr. Simpson's appointment," he said anxiously, "I suppose there's no new developments?"

"No," said the manufacturer's colourless voice.

"Well, I told Mr. Simpson as long as he was here, it wouldn't do him any harm to come up and see you."

Not a muscle relaxed in Thorndike's rigid face.

"He's made a sort of general application," continued Mr. Pitkin, in a low and hurried voice.

"I haven't asked for much; some inconspicuous place in the service," said Mr. Simpson humbly.

"And I told him I thought you might perhaps advise him—"

"Excuse me," interrupted Mr. Thorndike, rising to greet the coming guest.

It was Roland Hyde, the politician; a glance of intelligence flashed between the two men as they shook hands. Thorndike knew immediately that he had been sent down by Morgan Black. The caller advanced

across the room, a smiling jest upon his lips, his long, white-fingered hand before him—Roland Hyde, smoothest of all republican politicians, the ultimate ideal of the hotel café handsome man, pink-fleshed face, dark moustache, cleft chin, grey temples, immaculate, after the blonde school of dressing—of light fine checked suits, white vests barred with gold chains, and white Ascot ties, the whole bounded at either extremity by the sleek blackness of silk hat and patent leather shoes. You always saw him thus, with his ready smile, full of white teeth, the devoted handshake from that wonderful, soft, long hand with its diamond ring, a timely, laughing compliment and a story, when one or two men were gathered together, that would make your hair curl. It was known by some that he had sleepless purposes of his own, that he wanted to be congressman, and that, back of it all, those shrewd, humorous eyes lay always in wait, watching, judging, storing up information for another day.

The greetings made, Adoniram Pitkin started to introduce his friend.

“O, I know Mr. Simpson,” said Hyde coolly. The Rev. Mr. Simpson was of small consequence, apparently. Roland Hyde knew the value of a man to the fraction of the diameter of an eyelash. If he passed him by, you could kick him on sight with perfect impunity forever afterwards.

Roland Hyde immediately began playing the gallant to the young women; even Miss Gildersleeve evinced a human interest under the skillful appeals of this master. Little bursts of laughter started in their part

of the room. Occasionally you could hear under its cover, the discreet appeals of Adoniram Pitkin from the other side—"as regards to that, Mr. Thorndike —;" Mr. Simpson repeating the modesty of his desires for "an inconspicuous place." "Well, I'll see what I can do," said William Thorndike.

"I saw a friend of yours, Miss Ruth, as I came up," said Mr. Pitkin, entering the general conversation again.

"Who was it?"

"Young Mayhew."

"They say," continued Mr. Pitkin, devoting his remarks to Thorndike, "he's turned democrat."

"Yes," said Thorndike.

"What makes you think that?" asked Miss Thorndike quickly.

"He said so himself," said Mr. Pitkin. "He came home from college with a lot of crazy theorising notions about the tariff, and he's mugwumped."

"The democrats are making a big card of fellows like that," observed Hyde.

"They say he made a speech the other night at the banquet of the Young Men's Democratic Club," said Pitkin.

"He'll find he's made a mistake if he takes up that sort of thing too much," said Thorndike.

"Hasn't he the right, if he wants to?" asked his daughter, rather belligerently.

"O yes, he has the *right*," said the manufacturer.

It seemed that Mr. Pitkin and his friend must be going; they filed seriously out of the door.

"Still after his consulship," said Hyde. "Well, I hope they'll find a place far enough off to put him."

"I'm sorry about young Mayhew," said Thorndike, reflectively. "I'd intended to help him out a little."

"If he wants to turn democrat, it's his privilege, I suppose," said Hyde.

"Yes, but if he hadn't we might have helped him a little; we could have got him that associate judgeship, I think, for one thing."

"Can't you get it now?" spoke up Miss Ruth.

"Not for a democrat."

"O yes, that's so," she said quickly.

The two girls got up to go.

"We'll leave you two men alone, now," said Miss Ruth, "and you can talk all you want to." They disappeared into the hall and upstairs.

Thorndike offered his box of cigars to the other, and the two men lighted up.

"Well?" said Thorndike.

"Morton's been to Black."

"Yes."

"He wants it."

Thorndike sat erect, waiting; he rolled his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other.

"It's his wife," said Hyde. "She likes it and she won't give it up. She's bound he shall hang on another year, and she's swung him around."

"He promised to get out after this year."

"I know he did, but he lied. He's killed himself forever in this state by it. But what are you going to do about it?"

"What does Black think?"

"He thinks he's got to have it."

Not a quiver in the dark face to show that the ambition of a lifetime had been again deferred; perhaps lost forever.

"You see it's this way," explained Hyde. "He's in this to stay. If we go to fight him he'll get mad and he'll turn all his strength to Perkins. And you know what Perkins has got—all the Odd Fellows, and the country vote and the Baptists—he's pretty strong in his way—and if Morton throws his delegates to him, we can't beat him. He could make an awful fight this year, just because he's lieutenant governor. But if you drop out, we'll just simply drop him from lieutenant governor this year with the help of Morton and get him out of the way. And next year you'll get it sure; they can't beat you."

"I've heard that before," said Thorndike.

"Yes, but not in any such way as that."

The two men sat there talking an hour, one grim, erect and silent; the other talking, explaining, explaining, explaining, with little deprecatory gestures of the long, white hands. "For the good of the party," he said, "In your own interest," "For the sake of harmony." Thorndike did not once oppose him, he sat there simply listening.

"All right," he said in a dry voice, when he had heard it all. "You can withdraw my name."

The younger man had gone; Thorndike sat in his silent library, staring with hard, emotionless face across the room.

"Aren't you coming up to bed pretty soon, Dad?" called a voice from upstairs. "You haven't slept very much lately. Now come on, that's a good boy."

"All right," he called.

As he came heavily up the stairs he heard her rustling quickly back into her room.

"Good night," said the clear young voice above.

"Good night," said the hard, dry, disappointed voice from the stairway.

Chapter IV

IN CIRCE'S GARDEN

SOME exuberant youth fresh from college gave her the name, I fancy. Circe Dibble—no other mind would have formulated such an astounding and irreverent combination. You go north from the town a mile and a half; and you see the house, an ultra-gothic structure of brick, with steep, figured slate roofs, set back on a little knoll; and beyond and below it rise the great belching towers of the Dibble Print Works.

There she sits the long year through among her monsters—a big woman with a mass of flat frizzles, preternaturally black, heavy eyebrows, black piercing eyes, dark clothes, always, and a thin-lipped mouth, with crooked corners, like a turtle's.

When you see the place at first, you are appalled. Some iron manufacturer, you say, with a heart of steel and a zinc soul, has done this thing; cast-iron dogs, pointers, and pugs and setters, gentle does, huge branching stags, with their heads screwed around and fixed in perpetual discomfort—all distributed carelessly about the lawn, staring with uncanny earnestness toward the horizon. A spouting swan stands in

the centre, with a kindly-dispositioned cupid thoughtfully distending its neck, while it disgorges itself; here and there are green iron settees, upon which you sit down stiffly, in fear; and get up ornamented with a conventional dado of grape vines about your base.

Occasionally you run across, in retired corners, some lone Ethiopian Venus, crouching chastely behind a friendly syringa bush. If it had not been for the good offices of friends, they say, the late Elisha Dibble himself in a Roman toga, would have been established on the lawn, gazing regretfully at his former residence. And whatever reasons might be urged against this step by interested parties, there are certainly excellent precedents for it throughout New England. Many dear ones wait upon our lawns; are guarded and painted in the spring by the sweet care of the bereaved and widowed one who still remains—as any manufacturer of iron lawn art treasures will assure you.

When Elisha Dibble died, he was mourned tremendously, as was fitting. The factory was closed a week, and the workmen trooped beside him to his grave; the curtains in the house went down, the servants dressed in black, new carriage horses were secured—jet black, and ornamented with crape. The widow was in blackest mourning, and duplicate crayon pictures of the dead husband and master were hung in the house and the mill office; and beneath them, framed in black, copies of the resolutions of the Manufacturers' Club, bowing regretfully before an almighty power than themselves.

Then after the proper season was accomplished, Miranda Dibble, his widow, ruled in his stead,—as she was abundantly competent to do—a firm, strong woman, suspicious, of course, as such women often are; but, with a competent manager to guide her, a powerful factor in the world of manufacturers.

You could tell from the sight of the place itself that here lived a strong executive; the lawns and walks and drives rigidly handsome and exact; the trees and shrubs trimmed to the quick, bright, glossy painted surfaces everywhere—fences, and blinds and barns; always the discomfoting dread of fresh paint in the air. At first this paint was rather sombre—a dark green generally. Then, as years went on, the widow indulged her taste for warmer hues. Her harnesses are now black and white, the horses having gone into half mourning, supposedly. The fences have at times become quite bright. At one period carmine was used freely as a trimming; the swan in the fountain had bright red legs, a warm red sash was painted across the little cold stomach of the cupid; the house, with red blinds, glared across the lawn like some poor unfortunate stricken creature with sore eyes.

It was in this place that the only child, Pomona Dibble, grew up alone. The Gargoyle, the young men of her generation called her, with the frank brutality of youth. She was not handsome, certainly; she made a most annoying impression, always, when you met her; but sometimes it seemed to you she was as pitiful as she was grotesque. It was not her fault that she inherited all the ugliness and none of the re-

deeming virtues of the Dibble face; it was not her fault that all her costly feminine daintiness of gowns and hats sat awry on that hulking figure; it was not of her making—that childish sickness that set her back of her generation in body and mind; and so it was not her fault, exactly, that she had become what she was,—a creature apart from her kind. You can imagine her through those long years, gazing dejectedly from the piazza on the litter of monsters on the lawn, playing her three little pieces on the piano, rocking her idle hands in those empty rooms, with their glass chandeliers, their fat velvet easy chairs sitting about in moody emptiness, the copes of dried grass and peacock feathers, the hideous travesties of paintings, the china pugs guarding the sacred, unlighted, family hearth under the black-walnut mantelpiece, and occasionally a silent servant flitting back and forth on the soft carpets,—a tall weedy girl, with listless shoulders, and lustreless eyes, looking off into space.

The invitations for that afternoon were of course informal; by word of mouth mostly. “Just for our *own* young people,” said Circe, “that Pomona has always known, and their friends. Just a few; you’ll know how to amuse yourselves.”

Would they? They accepted, of course. How could they do otherwise? And they went like children to a task. You know how you accept your invitations of that sort—with a sort of dejection, tempered by a humorous imagination of the odd and amusing things you will probably see.

John Mayhew walked, as usual. When he arrived, a number had already reached there—a few neighbours, some relatives of the Dibbleses; “Chippy” Merriman and Lynde had just driven in. A moment afterward Ruth Thorndike, with Miss Gildersleeve, came ramping up the driveway in Ruth’s high dog-cart behind Black Devil, her father’s famous roadster; a sudden vision of a handsome, wide-nostrilled horse, a shining cart, and two young women in light gowns—the smaller in some flowered stuff, and a fluffy white hat; the taller one in grey.

They amused themselves as God willed. To some the Gargoyle showed her dogs and rabbits, and the horses. “O ye-as,” it must be delightful to have such a lovely place; “O ye-as,” they had a great many horses; “O no-ah,” she didn’t drive them herself. Some played croquet; some wandered about the menagerie and the iron seats; some played a little double tennis—two men standing stiffly at one side, improperly dressed for the game, two fluffy girls rustling here and there in their starched skirts, pecking hysterically at the balls with uncertain racquets held in the centre of the handles. And when they had satiated their dear hearts with this sort of thing, the final gathering in came, and refreshments (crude, but always plentiful and good) were served on the porch.

John Mayhew happened to be alone as he came up the steps. Lynde was mated with Miss Gildersleeve, Merriman stood near by with one of the Dibble relatives; Colonel Reginald Pitkin had appropriated Miss

Thorndike. As Mayhew approached, Ruth was laughing.

"Come over here, John," she called. There was a mischievous twist on her lips.

"Well, they all say you're mugwumped, Mayhew," growled our considerate and tactful military hero.

"I guess they're right this time," said Mayhew.

"That's what comes of thinking," observed Colonel Pitkin.

"Ye-ah. Did you ever try it?"

"No thanks, not if it acts that way." Mrs. Dibble, who was passing by, suddenly entered into the conversation.

"What's that?" she said loudly, "you a mugwump, John Mayhew? Why I never thought that of you."

"You can't tell what to think, these days, Mrs. Dibble," said Mayhew.

"Well, you'll get over it," said Circe pityingly.

"That's right, Mrs. Dibble," said Pitkin. "They all do."

"Hooray," cried Chippy Merriman, calling off the old college political economy yell. "Bre-k-e-kek-kex-Co-ax-co-ax. The tariff's a tax; the tariff's a tax."

"That's what he believes," said the warlike Pitkin, returning to the charge.

"It isn't what *you* believe, Reg, ever; it's what you *know*," said Mayhew.

"Well, I know one or two things," said Pitkin.

"Sta-Boy," said Chippy.

"O, what *fun*," observed Miss Thorndike.

The combatants were engaged again before the assembled and breathless multitude in the old rotary arguments. You remember those old tariff discussions of the eighties; they seem somewhat peculiar now; but then there was fire there.

"Well, you *will* admit that labour is paid less there than here." "Yes, but don't you *see* that doesn't make the slightest difference." "Well, you hold on." "No, I'm going to say this one thing. Don't you see—"

Round and round, in and out, back and forth—the same old labyrinth of words, leading nowhere.

This gladiatorial combat came to a crisis comparatively early. The temperament of the combatants was not the kind to permit the fight to drag.

"O well," said Mayhew, "there's no use arguing it, if you aren't going to admit what you know is true."

"I'd like to have you bring up one statement I know *is* true first," said Colonel Pitkin with slow and lofty insolence.

"O come, you fellows," said Chippy the peacemaker, "drop it. What difference will it make a hundred years from now?"

The debaters stopped—Colonel Pitkin still unmoved in his superior position; John Mayhew pretty thoroughly ashamed of himself.

The combat had pleased Miss Thorndike, it seemed.

"O, I do like to hear two men argue," she said. "It's too funny. What makes you always get so red in the face? It doesn't do any good, does it?"

The feeling of disgust with himself deepened in Mayhew into a sort of settled ugliness. From where he stood he could hear the noble Lynde explaining him in an aside to Miss Gildersleeve.

"There were quite a number of fellows like that in college, who were influenced by the professors, and got these ideas in their heads."

Mayhew thought bitterly of the last time he had seen the oracle at a political economy "Exam," "cribbing" his paper bodily from the leaves cut out of his textbook, and turned away.

Already the horses were beginning to come up to take the guests away; a groom appeared gingerly leading up Black Devil.

Chippy Merriman was telling the company about the last time he drove behind him. "He came up all the way on the jump," he asserted, "every corner on the fly, and the last half of the road she had him on his hind legs. I couldn't stand it finally. 'What's this?' I said, 'a circus? If so I'll humbly get out and walk.'"

"O, that isn't true, Mrs. Dibble," protested Ruth.

"Well anyway, Miss Gildersleeve is going to drive back with us," announced Merriman.

"Are you?" asked Ruth from the cart.

"You are, aren't you?" asked Merriman.

"O, I don't know; I hadn't decided yet."

"Yes, she is;" affirmed Merriman; "you'll let us take her, just for her own good."

"All right," said Miss Ruth, cheerily. "I'm glad of it; I wanted to take John Mayhew home anyway."

John Mayhew clambered in; "Good-bye," said Ruth over her shoulder.

"Good-bye, Mayhew," shouted Merriman. "Any last word for father?"

Mayhew did not answer. Black Devil was already down the road, and the cart taking the first corner on one wheel.

"Her father ought not to let that girl drive that horse," observed Mrs. Dibble.

"Her father," said Mr. Merriman, "what's he got to do with it? The little devil."

For a few moments John Mayhew sulked in his corner of the seat.

"What makes you so ugly this afternoon, John?" asked Ruth. "What's the matter with you?"

"I'm not ugly."

"Yes you are too. What's the matter?"

"O, I don't know. I suppose I made myself ridiculous enough for you, arguing with that ass Pitkin."

Ruth Thorndike laughed gayly. "You were kind of amusing," she admitted.

"You know you started it up for us."

Miss Ruth preserved a demure silence.

"And I suppose you thought he had the best of the argument."

"Of course I did."

"You don't think much of my politics, I suppose."

"No, I don't."

"Why not?"

"O, I don't know."

"But why?"

"I don't know—a democrat—it always seems so common someway."

"That's no argument."

"No, I don't suppose it is. It's all right, probably. I couldn't argue with you, if I wanted to; but it strikes me as funny that a young fellow like you should come home from college with your theories and things and dispute men like my father, who have been in the manufacturing business all their lives."

"But the manufacturers aren't the only people on earth, are they?"

"No."

"Well, all I want is to give the other people a show."

"Don't let's discuss it. I don't want to. I like things to be as they are."

"O, it's natural, I suppose. You people have got everything now and you propose to keep it."

"Well, have it that way if you want to. Only don't let's talk about it."

"What shall we talk about?"

"O, the afternoon and the people and what we saw."

"The same old Ruth," said surly John. "The same spoiled child. Let's have everything agreeable,—nothing we don't like."

"I think that's mean and unfair."

"Why, you are spoiled, aren't you? Does anybody deny you anything? You think of just one thing, having a good time."

"What should I think of?" said Miss Ruth com-

batively. "How miserable I am? If I should, I won't, no sir.

"I believe in having a good time. Why *shouldn't* I have a good time?" she continued, viciously shaking her whip over Black Devil, whereupon that equine fiend shook his head and went up into the air.

"What do you want me to do?" she said when she had put down the rebellion a trifle. "Go into a convent?"

"No stay right here where you are, but try to do something worth while occasionally."

"O, thank you very much," she said with rising colour.

"If you want to do charity work you can do it right here better than in a convent—among these people. The Lord knows they need it enough."

"John, you're enough to make a saint miserable," she complained, "you're positively grewsome."

"Well, if it comes to that," he persisted, "why shouldn't you take some interest in how these people live?"

"Because I don't want to," she said hotly. "I don't care; no, I don't. What are these people to me? And if I did, it wouldn't make the slightest difference. I couldn't do anything."

"What do you care how the rest of the world goes, so long as you amuse yourselves, eh?" said John Mayhew, in a theorist's nastiest manner.

They were in the region of the detached tenements now—great, dirty, wooden houses, that had encroached upon God's fields, with their high, bare wooden steps

to the doorways, the hard, grassless front yards, against their worn brick underpinning; the ash heaps and refuse in the rear—alive with dirty-legged children, industriously engaged about their own affairs.

Suddenly one adventurous infant in a single garment of dirty calico darted across the roadway close under the horse's nose.

"O," said Miss Ruth Thorndike, turning white to her hair and straining back upon the reins with all her might.

The child, preserved by a patient Providence for another time, passed on in safety.

"O, supposing we had hit him," gasped Miss Ruth Thorndike, the iron-hearted scorner of the people. She was trembling visibly; her lips did not get back their colour for several minutes. They were both silent for a moment.

"I'll take it all back, Ruth," said John Mayhew at last. "That's the way with you women—you say you don't care; but you do—you can't help it—it's built down into your souls."

"Did you have to wait till now to find it out?" asked Miss Thorndike.

Another little pause ensued.

"I don't suppose," said Ruth Thorndike meditatively, "I'm very strong on theories. I don't think women are, anyway. It's *people* I'm interested in—first.

"In this thing," she said frankly, "It's you. I wish you hadn't changed your politics. I'm always afraid it's going to hurt you."

"My business, you mean."

"Yes, there are so many things they might have done for you—the older men; my father—you understand—"

"Yes. But there's certain things a man can't do and keep his self-respect. That is one of them. I believe that way, that's all, and you can't change your beliefs to order, can you?"

"No, you can't," she admitted with a little sigh.

They were now come to the centre of the city. Ruth Thorndike stopped to let John Mayhew out at his office.

"Well, good-bye, you old bear;" she said, "try and be a little more agreeable the next time I see you."

He waited a moment in the doorway and watched her steady little upright figure in the big cart as she drove away.

Chapter V

SHAUN DHU

IT was Saturday night again in Ellington; John Mayhew had come down from his office and stood in the doorway watching. In the third story hall across the street, the weekly Polish dance—a wedding festival probably—was in full swing; the hideous dissonance of the instruments came down into the street, punctuated incessantly with the interminable grunt of the bass viol—that odd heathen music, with its stumbling rythms, a strange, barbaric thing, come pounding down the uncounted centuries from some dim, forgotten, Asian highland. Down the long street, under the electric light, the restless crowds went shuffling to and fro—the chattering girls, arm in arm, the loud-mouthed, sophisticated boys in their best clothes, the swearing, lounging men, the old folk, with deep lines in their grey faces; thin, bent, almost worn out, a generation of agrarian peasants, warped into grotesque shapes by the long strains and wrenchings of this fierce, new, industrial civilisation. Familiar forms went drifting by—the French girls, in twin toilets, two lavender gowns exactly the same, two flopping hats, with black plumes, two pairs of greyish gloves, walk-

ing with stiff arms and eyes straight ahead, constrained to silence by the sense of their own magnificence; the "Irish Queen," in her black gown, tall, willowy, clothes-conscious, swinging her hips and arching her neck; a lone Polish woman in her shawl,—squat, loose-waisted, staring stupidly before her like a bewildered animal; a poor, shambling Yankee farmer from the hills, with his shabby, bedraggled wife and their tow-headed children; and across at the mouth of his cheap clothing store, old Echstein, the Jew money-lender, private banker and confidential adviser of the Horde, with his outstanding ears and his hooked beak gleamed down like a grey bird of prey on the crowd whose ignorance furnished him his living.

Here was the market place of Babel—a half a dozen tongues, a half a hundred minor tribes, with different ideals and superstitions and hopes; a great mongrel American crowd, come together for the building of another nation.

John Mayhew joined the endless procession down the street. In the doorway, and the corners as he passed, the boys stood smoking and spitting with precocious profusion on the walks, flapping their feet in an occasional clog dance, and commenting on and chaffing the crowd as it went slouching by. "Halloo, Charlie," said one, "you're feelin' well to-night, how are you looking'?"

"Hello, girls," said another, in falsetto voice.

"Hello, Mame, is that you, where're goin'?"

"None of your business."

"My, she's getting sassy, though."

Below, at Bull Halloran's saloon, the big fellows in black cutaway coats stood along the bar, staring stupidly into space above their undrained glasses of beer, like oxen at their mangers, and down the street a little back in an alley, a street corner quartet, with its eternal, shrill tenor—Irish youth with slender bodies and hard faces, stood in a little knot solemnly singing a "mother" song, with desperate pathos. It seemed as if that tenor's heart must break.

He was in the vicinity of the Patch now, beyond the centre of the town. The stores had been left behind, except here and there a little grocery; the crowds had begun to thin. Just before him he noticed one of the little old women of the Irish quarter poking feebly along home, with her eyes on the uneven sidewalk—a little black figure; black worsted hood, black shawl across her huddled shoulders, flimsy black skirt, and cloth. Congress 'shoes; a withered face, crisscrossed with wrinkles, bright little furtive eyes, her thin frame torn every now and then with the terrible, racking, skin-and-bones cough of broken old age. It looked to him like John Carney's grandmother, that strange little old miser of the Patch, if it were possible that she could be still alive.

John Carney—handsome Shaun Carney, that wonderful body, that fierce, unbroken spirit—that unchallenged boyish hero of the days when a place on a big professional ball team formed the accepted pinnacle of man's ambition—where could he be now? He had not heard of him for months; possibly it was years. He smiled as he looked back to the old time. Never, in

all his life, had any one individual inspired the same feeling of awe as this older boy from The Patch had in his childish soul.

He turned, as he was thinking, by a loiterer's whim, up on the platform of the railroad station—the old, grimy railroad station, with its wedge-shaped, overhanging roof, and the sides greasy from the backs of two generations of loafers. To the left, along the tracks, still lay the huddle of The Patch—the houses black masses in the blue darkness of the moonless night. Now and then a voice arose from them or the barking of a dog; here and there a yellow light shone from the low windows. It was not all Irish now; the children of the old owners had gone up to better things; to neat white houses on the higher ground—the boys mechanics and citizens—and one or two priests perhaps and lawyers; the girls school teachers or in the stores. In their place other foreigners had come, although still there lingered here and there a few old Irish families.

John Mayhew turned away at last and walked around the station. There were no more passenger trains that night; the agent had closed up and gone. The back was in total darkness; in front a flickering gas lamp cast a shifting spot of yellow light upon the empty platform. As he walked, his footsteps echoed loudly through the silent place. Beyond, along the switch track he saw the dim, melancholy lines of freight cars, looming unnaturally high in the darkness, with the long black aisle of shadow between them—lurking places for all kinds of half imagined evils—for

the migratory criminal and desperado, the half savage outcasts of civilisation that slink along its great iron highways.

What a lonely spot it was—this empty railroad station at night. He turned around into the shadow at the further corner of the platform and came face to face with a man.

"Hello," he said.

"Hullo," said the other gruffly. They peered through the dark into the white spots that served for faces.

"Shaun Carney," said Mayhew, with a cry of recognition.

"Jock Mayhew," said the other. "I thought first you was John Heenan."

"Well, how are you these days?"

"Good, how's yourself?"

"O, all right. I'm glad to see you, John. I was just thinking of you. I thought I saw your grandmother as I was coming down here; that is, if she isn't dead?"

"Dead, no. She'll never die; she ain't human;" said Carney, harshly. "Let's get out here where we can see something." He led the way out to the light and set his shoulders against the wall, while Mayhew stood before him.

"Playing ball much nowadays?" asked the latter.

"No, not since I got that," said Carney, showing a right hand with his two middle fingers gone.

"How'd you do it?"

"In the machine shop. I got it caught in some gears."

"That's too bad," said Mayhew.

"It spoiled me for playing ball all right."

"You were playing right along before that, weren't you?"

"Yes; I was in the state league."

"I heard you were going into the national one time."

"Well, I was; they was goin' to give me a trial before I got this, but I don't believe I was good enough for those fellers. They're pretty fast company for me in that league."

He stopped abruptly. The same old stolid indifference, the same laconic habit of speech, born of years of boyish worship of his powers, sat upon him as in the old days. He stood there slanted a little back against the side of the wall—still a fine figure of a man—though now John Mayhew thought, a little slouchier about the shoulders—coal black hair; clear-cut features; melancholy, deep, blue eyes showing the white of the eyeball underneath, staring straight out into the distance before him; a firm, straight, compressed mouth; a bold chin, with thick black stubble on it, and the muscles always twitching at the corners of the jaw.

"I suppose you're practicing law these days," continued Carney.

"Yes, I'm trying to; what are you doing?"

"Nothin'."

"I thought you were down in the mill machine shop."

"I was."

"What made you get through?"

"I got the sack."

"How's that?"

"O, it's that Thorndike," said the man, with a great oath. "He's paid special attention to me; I licked one of his damned overseers."

"How'd it happen?"

"Well, I'll tell you." Here was a cause which loosed the tongue of the silent man. "I was workin' there in the machine shop last spring, as I had been, since I dropped the baseball business, off and on before. Well, they've got a foreman there named Allen—a damned, little shrunk-up Yankee; there ain't a man in the shop wouldn't like to kill him; and he had it in for me; he wanted to get my job for his brother-in-law. He hated me anyway, but that's what he was drivin' at—to get me out and get the other feller in."

"Well, he was layin' for me; he had it all fixed up. His idea was to give me some gauges that was off, and then when my work came in he was goin' to fire me. But I wasn't afraid of him; I had somethin' waitin' for him."

"So one day, he come around and looks over my shoulder and he says, 'Your work ain't right.'

"'It's just as near right's I can make it,' I says, 'an' don't you forget it.'

"'Well, you've got to have it better'n that,' he says."

“‘All right,’ I says, ‘you give me good gauges and I’ll give you good work.’

“‘I don’t want any sass from you,’ he says. ‘You do your work or you get through.’

“‘Yaas, I will,’ I says, ‘I know your game, by God, and I know something else; I know about that last lot of steel you spoiled and had dumped into the river. You go ahead and fire me and get your damned brother-in-law in here; it’ll be the worst day’s work you ever did in your life and you’ll think so too!’

“O, that would have ended that all right; he jawed some more, but he was ready to quit. Only that minute, just by my luck, that damned, black-hearted Thorndike steps in just in time to hear the last of it. You know how the cuss goes pokin’ around the factory.

“‘What’s goin’ on here?’ he says.

“Old Allen looked like a rag baby; he was scared silly.

“‘This man didn’t do his work right,’ he says, ‘and when I spoke to him about it he got sassy.’

“‘Why don’t you let him go, then?’ says Thorndike.

“‘He’s a liar,’ I said, ‘I did as good work as anybody till he gave me those gauges; they’re off; you can look at ’em yourself.’

“‘I didn’t ask you to talk,’ says Thorndike, turning his back to me.

“‘No,’ I says, ‘but you heard me talkin’. This is a free country, I guess. All I want is a fair shake, and not get driven out of a job because your damned

little bow-legged foreman wants to get it for his wife's brother.'

" 'You keep your mouth shut,' says Thorndike. 'When I want your advice about my foreman, I'll let you know.'

" 'That's all right,' I says. 'All I ask for is a show, and if I don't get that, there's one thing I can do—I can get out.'

" 'Yes,' says Thorndike, 'you can do that right off too.'

" Then Allen begins to smile. That was too much for me.

" 'But before I go, I'm goin' to hand *you* a little keepsake,' I says. And I got him one under the jaw he'll wake up nights and remember.

" And when they were pickin' him up, I turned to Thorndike and I says, 'you're a hell of a man to run a shop, you are, and pretend to run it fair; come pokin' around to see what's goin' on and then hear only one side of a story. For fifteen cents I'd give you one just like it.'

Carney stopped for a moment, staring in melancholy reflection out into the dark.

" What happened then?" said Mayhew.

" What happened then?" said Carney, bitterly. "What do you suppose? He's been chasin' me ever since—that's what happened. He's been making an example of me. He had me up in court for sluggin' Allen. I expected that. I paid my fine, and was damned glad of it. But my name was Dennis for another job around here. They wouldn't look at me."

"Well, you could get one somewhere else, couldn't you?"

"Yaas, I could. That's what I thought till I tried it. I ain't got no more chance than a dog. He's got me blacklisted all over this part of the country. What show have I got? More'n that, he's got the police chasin' me. He's given Heenan special instructions to look out for me, I know that. He's caught me once when I was out one night with the boys, and give me a jail record because I didn't have the price of the fine. That's what I jumped for when you come round the corner just now."

He paused a moment while his late anger gathered strength, and then broke out again in a great fierce mouthful of oaths. His passion possessed him—the mad hate of the wronged employee—no blacker sits brooding in the heart of man; the insane and impotent physical lust to once—only once—have your fingers at the throat of that one man in the universe, whom the resistless laws of society set above you to work his will upon you and yours, right or wrong, without appeal.

"What kind of a show do you call that?" he said. "I was gettin' my three dollars and a half a day, and earnin' it, by God, till he stuck his black face in and threw me out on my back. What right's he got to do that, without even hearin' what I had to say? What right's he got to chase me around and keep me from earnin' my livin'? I wish to God, I had him once where I could reach him. *I'd show him.*"

His outburst died away into silence.

"There's one thing sure. You want to remember it," he went on in a calmer mood. "If you get him down on you, you might as well get out of here. I've found that out. He *owns* this town, by God; and everybody in it. You don't ever want to let him get after you, I tell you that. I ought to got out months ago."

"Are you going now?" said Mayhew finally.

"Yes, I can't loaf around any longer. I can do it nights all right. But I can't stand it days; I've got to be doin' something."

"When are you going?"

"To-night; that's what I'm here for."

"There aren't any more trains to-night."

"No, I'm goin' to jump the down freight."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm goin' South—down to Charleston."

"What's down there?"

"I got a feller, that I know, lives there. He says he's got something for me. You remember hearing when those Southerners decided to come up here to buy goods. Well, this man's father went down there to work with one of 'em—he's a carpenter by trade—a ship carpenter now, down there in Charleston; the young feller's been up here at different times. Mike Garvin, his name is; you may o' seen him—a red-headed feller. He used to come up here and visit his aunts."

Mayhew shook his head.

"Well, anyway, he writes me the other day if I'd come down, he had somethin' for me to do."

"Here's the letter now," he said, hauling it out of his hip pocket—a long envelope of cheap bluish paper, with an address scrawled on its centre in small, cramped handwriting.

John Mayhew read it under the dim gas-light.

"DEAR JACK," it ran. "I write to tell you I want you to come down. I have got something for you to do. There is money in this job, John. The two of us will get more than we ever saw before. But I want to see you first. Jump a frait and come down here. You won't never be sorry. And so Goodby til I see you.
MIKE."

"What do you suppose he's got?" said Mayhew, handing back the letter.

"O, I dunno; he's got somethin' up his sleeve. He's a shifty lad—Mike Garvin—somethin' he's been working up. I'm goin' to try it anyway. I can't be any worse off than I am now."

They stopped talking and stared out across the station platform.

"Well, I hope you'll have good luck," said Mayhew. The other did not stop his moody staring to reply.

"What time will you get down there?"

"About the last of next week."

The gaslight tossed and flickered above their silence and shifted the dim black corners to and fro; a dog barked across the river. A far off up the grade came the melancholy, hollow sound of a whistle. The freight was coming—the night freight, known to drowsy mankind not so much as a substantial reality, but as a distant sound, heard in the broken intervals

of sleeping; a dim, mysterious, ghostly thing that comes calling down the valley through the dark.

"There she is," said Carney.

They waited a little longer till they saw the blaze of the headlight at the curve a half a mile away.

"I'll have to be getting up into the yard a little ways," said Carney. "She slacks up there a little."

"Well, be good to yourself."

They shook hands.

"Good luck to you," said Mayhew.

The black figure disappeared into the dark.

The train approached from the other direction—slowly, laboriously, with the ponderous majesty of great weight—its yellow light blazing its path before it on the black and shining rails. It passed the platform, ringing its melancholy bell, the great, round-shouldered labouring engine, the silent figure on the high cab seat, the bent slave of the furnace feeding its red maw, the long funeral procession of dim cars, filing painfully by, clanking, groaning, squealing, along the rails; then last of all the dull lighted caboose. The red flood from the furnace showed Carney's figure by the roadside; then the door was shut and blackness came again. The train moved heavily on, the multitude of jarring noises began to die away, the five red lanterns at its rear lessened and lessened in the dim blue darkness, and disappeared around the curve. Once more the far mysterious whistle came across the empty night.

John Mayhew turned from staring, and started back toward home filled with a rebellious regret—the regret of a youth not yet quite hardened to be a man; the re-

gret for the freedom that has gone and rebellion at the exacting slavery of the life which lies before. He recalled the Carney that he first knew, small, black, stout-legged, aggressive, the days at Maggie Shea's and their relations to one another, not close friendship perhaps, but a sympathy that was closely akin to it. He saw Black Jack Carney a little older, at the swimming hole, his bare body, that beautiful pillar of white flesh, poised for the high dive in the summer sun—broad chest, thin flanks, clean-cut supple legs, and the fine, moving muscles twisting like ropes upon his shoulders and up-stretched arms. The days of the ball field came back to him, the excitement of the game, the heat, the dryness in your mouth, the freedom of running with the wind in your hair, all this was gone forever. Before them stretched the inhospitable world—the sentence of a life at hard labour, or some penalty a thousand times as bad. And here he sat in this dull town, held here against his will by a hostile fortune, and there went Carney, an outcast from his native place, a man with a great anger in his heart, gone out cursing into the night to a new land and a new people and new experiments. No doubt to little good, yes certainly, to little good.

Chapter VI

A CALL TO DUTY

OCCASIONALLY, on the sides of the old blocks, your eye is caught by a pathetic little reminder of the past—the forgotten sign of a dead lawyer. There it has hung, months and years perhaps, greying in the weather, and no one has had concern enough to take it down. Long ago this learned counsel has gone forth to plead his last defence before the bar of Almighty Justice; and still the clients from away, who have not heard, drop in to see him; and still the farmers, clumping up the stairs, stop occasionally to ask when he will be back again.

In the fall of 188- the sign of Stephen Pratt still lingered on the second story wall. On either side of it appeared two fresh and virgin signs, one very much like many thousands you have seen; the other, large, striking, impressive, one might almost say portentous in its dignified announcement of that name, which multitudes might yet delight to honour. Behind these, across the second story dingy hall, two young practitioners lay in wait, listening with interest to the rare footsteps on the stairs; an interest growing to most acute anxiety when the mysterious stranger passed

and made his final, fatal choice at the parting of the ways upon the landing.

Generally, it must be said, these footsteps did not pause at all, but went blundering on and upward through the dark corridor to the third floor—the region of oil-stove housekeeping, the place from which descended the weird odour at noonday and those more than occasional outbursts of woe, which admitted the tenants of the second floor into the sacred agonies and responsibilities of family life. Here was a landing full of mops and brooms and buckets, with a broken and penitent refrigerator, brooding in its dark corner; here occasionally you might see a bony woman of middle age with a tousled bang, flit back and forth, draped in a melancholy dark calico wrapper, calling metallic-voiced warning to her offspring; and here in modest chambers—in one most modest bedroom, to be exact, lived “General” Barrett O’Hara, ex-school-master, and ex-soldier of the War of the Rebellion, ex-Fenian—now restored to the arts of peace as bridge tender of the City of Ellington through the influence of the Democratic party.

There are those who assert that if the fiery and oratorical Celt were but given his equal opportunity in the land, every adult member of the race would be found a lawyer—all rising men, or having already arisen through a well lawyered society to a position of permanent prominence—all close shaven, all with the gold-rimmed eyeglasses, fastened, preferably, at the end of the long gold chains, by which they can be thoughtfully twirled about in times of deep public considera-

tion; all in cutaway suits and black bow ties, and abnormally thin-soled shoes—all of serious, far-away, preoccupied mien, all with their poetic quotations, their bursts of polysyllabic prose and their passionate but ever ornamental gestures.

Yet why speculate on these purely theoretic matters, when we have before us the great Brian Haitch Twohig barrister; for it was none other that sat in awful, brooding silence among his new law books behind the impressive sign upon our block, upholding the majestic traditions of the law bequeathed to him by "a Burke, a Grattan and a Daniel O'Connell," as they say in the St. Patrick's day orations. Brian Haitch Twohig, two proud Irish names, and an initial "H"—that one unconquered shibboleth of English speech, which marks the Celt to the third and fourth generations across the face of the habitable earth.

This afternoon this one had emerged from the ground glass door of his sanctuary, stalked across the intervening hall, bearing seriously in his right hand before his breast that solemn and inscrutable symbol of deep thought, his half smoked, fat, five-cent cigar, and stood with his judicial legs contemplatively apart on the floor of John Mayhew's office. To the outward eye he was a snub-nosed young man, with flushed spots on his high cheek bones, and a round brown moustache and small eyes—a good humoured, rather amusing face, you might have said, but for the sombre cloud of responsibility forever lowering between those brows. Already he had his eyeglasses, though not yet gold-rimmed,—his cutaway suit, his

immaculate linen and his black bow tie; and there he stood discoursing, his filmy and distant eye fixed upon the upturned end of his cigar. He was outlining the position of Brian Haitch Twohig on the decision, which was soon to be expected of the supreme court; already he had laid down the broad grounds on which he stood; he was now pointing out the necessity and simplicity of the result.

"It's a legal conception, that has prevailed from the first of the common law of England, and from there it was adopted into the legislation of this land." There was just the faint touch of brogue upon his scholarly sentences. "From this I hold that it's essential accordin' to the laws of logic to reach but one conclusion, and that's the one I've been telling you about. And I defy anyone to bring adequate authority to the contrary."

He ceased into a deep silence. Slowly he lifted his cigar to his lips and thoughtfully he exhaled the smoke.

"Am I right?" he inquired.

"I guess you are," said his hearer.

John Mayhew was surly. "That isn't worrying *me* so much," he continued, "as how I'm goin' to get a livin' on the business. I'm sick of the thing—this collecting bills and sitting around waiting for something else."

"I know just how you feel; I've felt that way myself," said Mr. Twohig in a lofty calm. "But you'll get your practice if you stick to it." (Whiff.) "I was telling one of my clients" (To John Mayhew,

keeper of records of the footsteps on the stairs, the masterly manner in which his compeer used this phrase always appealed particularly.) "I was telling this client this mornin' that it was remarkable (whiff) the way a young man's practice grew." (Impressive pause.) "There was a time, as I said to him, when I felt discouraged, but in ways I could not explain myself affairs have changed till I can see the future opening up in a most satisfactory manner."

His aspect of philosophic calm always got upon the nerves of Mayhew.

"O, come down," he said brutally. "I know as well as you do what there is in this dead hole. There isn't business enough here to keep an English sparrow cheerful."

"Speak for yourself," said the sage severely, "I'd like to know what's the matter with O'Harrigan and Griffin?"

It was the start of the big speculation in tort cases against manufacturing corporations among the lawyers in this corner of New England, and this firm were the local leaders in it. The two men came to Mayhew's mind—O'Harrigan, the mouthpiece, that big, rosy, statuesque Irish Apollo, with his ambrosial curls upon his neck, his blue romantic eye; with his windmill gestures before the jury and those poor lovely orphan verbs and nouns and adjectives, left without their predicates; with no visible means of support but an exclamation point; and back of him Griffin, the worker, the intelligence—the little darkfaced man, with the sharp, tense face, and the hard sharp lines which made

it seem as if a triangle of flesh had been set back from his cheeks about the nose and mouth; the restless mind that planned and searched and thought and drummed up the business, and did the "dirty work."

"Nothing," answered Mayhew, "if you want to dirty your hands with that kind of thing."

"Well," (pause) "Personally it would be distasteful to me, but there are high pecuniary inducemints. Moreover, it must be highly satisfactory to win so large a proportion of cases as they do."

"Yes," said Mayhew, "and how do they do it?"

"Well, how do they?"

"You know as well as I do, by outside work with the jury."

"I don't entirely agree with you."

"How do they do it then?"

"Understand me," said the thinker, "I don't say they wouldn't see the jury, if they found it necessary; but it's farther back than that. They get the juries they want from the board of aldermen—that's the way it's done."

"The kind of men they can swing, you mean."

"Exactly so—the workin'min and thim that have sympathy for thim—and the Catholics, perhaps."

"I guess that's right."

"It is," said Mr. Twohig, with a solemn nod.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I've given considerable consideration to that point. There's only one way to do. You've got to change your aldermen, and it's the young men, the men that are comin' up, that'll have to be looked to."

"I'll tell you something," he continued, "it's in the strictest of confidence. I am now considering running for the aldermen, or possibly for the common council."

He stepped back to observe the effect.

"My friends are now workin' for me. They're goin' to approach Mr. Skeane for me."

"Hello," said Mayhew, from the window, "speaking of the devil, there he is now across the street."

"And who's that with him?" said Mr. Twohig. "O, it's Pat Ash."

"They're coming across the road; by gad, they're coming here."

"Probably it's to see me," said the young candidate. "I was informed once before that he was considerin' holding a conference with me."

He retired in some haste, to put his house in order.

The heavy footsteps and the light ones proceeded up the stairs. At the head they stopped a moment; then, unexpectedly they turned to the left instead of to the right and John Mayhew's office door swung open.

"Is this Mr. Mayhew?" asked the big man, from the threshold.

"It is," said Mayhew, rising.

"My name is Skeane," said the big man, slowly advancing with his fat hand before him.

"How do you do," said Mayhew.

"And this is Mr. Ash."

The small man in a striped worsted suit reached out his hand with the awkward shoulder motion of a pugilist, his face relaxing into a grotesquely sudden

smile. "How de do," he said hoarsely, then lapsed again into silence and the background.

"Won't you sit down, gentlemen?" said Mayhew.

Now and then you see Irishmen with the oblique eyebrows like Skeane's, an almost Chinese type of face,—successful men, they are apt to be, lawyers and priests and perhaps saloon keepers. "King" Skeane—everyone with us knew him by that name—was a marked figure—a large man, in dark clothes, black cutaway coat and black string tie, all worn rather carelessly; a large face, with a strong jaw set upon the close smoked butt of a cigar in the corner of his mouth; a grizzled moustache, hair white at the temples, bright, intelligent, rather humorous eyes, and above those, the flaring eyebrows in the wrinkled forehead, marking the whole face with their strange touch of craft. Here was force and cunning together in one face. When Matt Skeane wanted something in politics, you had better get out of the way.

As for Ash, he was merely, to say it in one word, a sharp street gamin grown to be a man, with a thin face, already wreathed with hard lines, a reddish stubble at the jaw, and a greenish glassy eye.

King Skeane settled his big body immovably in the chair.

"We was goin' by," he said, "and we thought we'd drop in and have a talk with you."

"Have a cigar," he continued, distributing them. All three solemnly lighted up.

"Well, how's the practice comin' in?" asked Skeane.

"I guess I could stand more," said Mayhew. "But then I suppose I've got to take what comes."

"You just hang on; don't let 'em bluff you; it'll come," said the King.

"They tell me," continued Skeane, "you're a good democrat now."

"I don't know but I'm as much that as anything," said Mayhew. "My people were all republicans, but I couldn't stand that tariff business, so I got out."

"I guess that's near enough, as old Maggie Sullivan said to the Jew peddler that gave her a dollar too much in change. You voted the ticket this fall, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"That's what they told me."

"I guess he's the man we want," said Skeane to Ash.

"Guess he is," said the hoarse voice.

"Now here," said the King to Mayhew. "Here's the truth of it. Our people are makin' out the slate for city election and we're lookin' for an alderman in your ward."

He stopped and stared at Mayhew.

"Yes?" said Mayhew, interrogatively.

"And we're here to see if you'll take it?"

"What, I?" said Mayhew.

"Yes."

"O, I couldn't do it."

"Why not?"

"I don't believe it would be advisable for me just now."

"Why not? Are you afraid of your practice?"

"No, it isn't that."

"Well, then, you haven't got any reason, have you?"

"Yes——" said Mayhew, hesitantly.

"What is it?"

"Well, in the first place," assured Mayhew feebly, "I don't think I'm the man you want."

"Yes; well, we'll risk that; what else?"

"And in the second place," he said, choosing his words as carefully as he could, "there's been a general idea that the board of aldermen here weren't any too good,—that there's been a good deal of crookedness there, if you want the truth."

"Well, that's a hot reason, I must say. It won't make 'em any better, will it, if all the good men refuse to come in? Besides, you don't want to believe all you hear. You know John Chester?"

"Yes."

"Ain't he a good fellow?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, what's the matter with Charlie Newell?"

"Nothing at all."

"Well, they were aldermen, weren't they?"

"Yes they were."

"I hope you ain't one of those fellers that sit and hollers all the time how virtuous all the rest has got to be, and then don't turn out to the caucuses, for fear they'll smell tobacco smoke. I don't believe you are either, and when we come to you and say we need you in that ward, and we've got to have you, if the

party's goin' to win, I don't believe you're goin' to give us any old women's talk.

"There's just two kinds of men in politics in this town," continued Skeane, "or any other. There's the fellers with gloves that sit around and holler 'Purity' and let the others do the work; and there's the fellers that get out and do something. Only there's one difference in this town. There's just one man that's responsible for the kind of people that get into the city government; and that's Thorndike. He's got all the rest of 'em scared. They don't dare come out, for fear of their business. All but the Irish; they'd come out anyhow, just for the fight."

Mayhew laughed.

"That's right," growled Skeane. "Now look here," he continued, "has Thorndike got any hold on you?"

"No, he hasn't," answered Mayhew quickly.

"Are you afraid of him; for your business, I mean!"

"No, I'm not; what do you take me for?"

"Then why don't you come out? No, don't give me any rot about bein' busy and all that. Why don't you? Ain't it just as much your duty and more to get out and help do a thing, as to sit around and say it ought to be done?"

"I don't know but it is."

"Well, you'll stand then, won't you?"

"I'll think it over and let you know," pleaded Mayhew.

"Aw now, come, there's no use of waitin'. You're

goin' to take it now. You might as well make up your mind now as later."

"O, all right, I'll take it, if you think you want me," said Mayhew finally.

"Well, be God, that's right, me boy," said "King" Skeane, heartily, pressing his heavy hand on Mayhew's knee. "That's the kind of men we're lookin' for."

The cigars were out; the interview was done; the visitors got up and left.

"Well, good day to you," said King Skeane, waving his hand with heavy dignity. "You'll hear from me later."

The heavy steps and the light ones passed down the stairway and clicked again on the brick pavement.

After a short time, John Mayhew rose and followed them. As he left the building, the form of Brian Haitch Twohig appeared at his office door, unconquerable curiosity having so far overcome his natural high reserve as to make him pop out quite suddenly.

"Are they gone?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mayhew moving on.

"Just a minute," said Mr. Twohig, hastily. "Would it be demandin' too much if I asked you if they were talkin' politics to you?"

"Yes, they were."

"Did they allude to me?"

"No," said Mayhew. "They wanted me to run for alderman,—though I don't suppose that was to come out just yet."

"O, no," said Mr. Twohig in a sad voice, "certainly not. I'll never spake of it."

"Are you sure they made no mistake?" he went on.

"There's no possibility,—I mane," he hurried to explain, "that they might have mixed me up—bein' so close together, as we are."

"No," said Mayhew, impatiently. "They seemed to know my name."

"O, well, you'll excuse me for askin'?"

"Sure."

"And will you run?"

"Yes," said Mayhew. "I guess I'll have to now, from all I see."

As Mayhew passed homeward along the street he noticed there was no light in Mr. Twohig's office; neither had he come out. Brian Haitch Twohig evidently was sitting there alone, wrapped in gloomy contemplation.

Chapter VII

MEMORIES

HERE, on the lonely upper road across the Hill, set back into the vacant fields, lies the first graveyard of the Irish. Below it, down the road, rises the present cemetery, where the long black line stops now,—a decent, sanctimonious place, with its fat stones ranged in pompous regularity in front, masking the rank and file behind. Affection still lingers there and fleshy widows waddle in and out. But here beyond lie the first immigrants, neglected; two little acres of huddled dead; small white headstones awry and broken on the uneven ground, the row of arbor-vitæ trees, a black-robed, priestly procession, in the rear; the falling fence, which leans forward into the road, and lets between its broken rails an occasional solitary child to wander silently in about its graves. You will not find a more pathetic thing in a long day's journey through a story book. There are many grotesque sights here; and humorous and uncouth—the odd illiterate inscriptions, the strange and wonderful laments in verse, the common names of common men, oft-times mis-spelled, the weird heathen names of the birthplaces of the dead—Skibbereen, and

Ballinamara and Inchigeelagh and Kiltallagh. But here they lie, the dark-haired, blue-eyed people, come down into their alien graves, lonely men and women, or whole great generous families laid away, after the fashion of the old country—where men are cheap and land is dear—one above another in a common grave. Above them rises everywhere the Irish cross, on every headstone the same formula—

“ Sacred to the memory of

JEREMIAH O’KEEFE

A native of Dingle parish, County Kerry, Ireland,
who died March 21, 1867.

May his soul rest in peace. Amen.”

It is as if almost you could hear them where they lie, a poor little congregation of strange souls in a foreign ground, calling with one voice back to the green memories of youth, the fields of the old country, the churchyards over the far seas; those well-remembered places, where all their folk lie buried, father, son, and grandson, for centuries, within the parish bounds where they were born; sometimes, it seems, you almost hear the sighs exhaled from the dark corners underneath the arbor-vitae trees.

Homesickness, weary, bitter homesickness, lies heavily upon the whole neglected place—the falling and the fallen stones, the obliterated walks. No doubt the others felt it, too, who left no gravestones to express it; those underneath the wooden crosses

washed clear of every vestige of a name by twenty summers' rains; those others in the further corner of the yard, where the dead of the cholera epidemic and the typhus fever year lie buried in their two great graves, no longer distinguishable, even by a mound.

Occasionally they bring here even now one come late to the little gathering, some worn out, withered body to be laid beside the crumbled relics of youth and middle age left here more than a quarter of a century ago.

Ruth Thorndike, driving up the road alone in the autumn afternoon, came across the closing of a hasty ceremony of this kind, just as the grave was being shovelled up, and the hacks turned scampering home again. It made her think of those early recollections of her childhood, of standing back behind the house and hearing the wailing she feared and could not understand, the last of the keening in the old cemetery, come in across the trees of the deep garden. And this reminded her of all those early days and Maggie. She had not seen Maggie for weeks and months. Why not go and see her now? She would. Tom, the pony, obediently turned him down the hill once more.

There was the place again, the neat white house on the side street upon the hill above the Patch, with its twin fir trees before the entrance, and its grape arbour in the garden. And there in the doorway stood Maggie, shining, radiant, wiping her mouth with her immaculate gingham apron preparatory to a great warm Irish kiss.

"Well! How air ye, my darlin'; how air ye," she

said, drawing her into the state front parlour. "God bliss ye, how foine ye're lookin'.

"There's somebody out here," she said, pointing to the sitting room. "Just wait here a minute, till I go out an' spake to her."

There was a whispering of two voices in the other room, one urging and the other refusing.

"No, thank you," said the strange voice, "I'd be too much honoured."

It seemed to Ruth as if there were a note of bitterness in her speech. A tall, pale girl, with reddish hair, moody, blue eyes, and rigid, compressed mouth went silently through the little front hall out into the street.

"Now, I'll come out in the sitting room, if I may," said Ruth.

"Sure and ye'll do as ye please."

Ruth walked out into the neat room, with the rag carpet and seated herself in one of the plain, comfortable rocking chairs. Maggie established her strong, round, little person in the one opposite it, beaming and sparkling.

"Who was that girl who was here when I came in?" asked Miss Thorndike, seizing the first opportunity of hasty exit from the present line of thought.

"O that gurr! her name's Katie Desmond; she's a dressmaker here. Ye remember that John Carney that used to play on the ball team—the pitcher, they called him?"

"The dark fellow—rather handsome?"

"That's the one. Will, she was goin' to marry him—though she'd never say so. But now he's lost his

job and gone away, and I don't know what'll become of her. Poor gurr! I'm sorry for her; she's niver been the same since—always hard an' bitter loike.

"She's a good gurr! too; I hate to see it. I knew 'em both whin they was babies. They was Patch people, both of 'em."

"What's the Patch like, now, Maggie? It's changed a lot since the old days, hasn't it?"

"Will, thin, it's changed a good deal. There's Oitalions there now, a good many of 'em and the only Irish that's left are the old-timers."

"And very poor, I suppose."

"No, not all of 'em. There's old Mrs. Carney—the grandmother of the bye I was tellin' ye of; 'the Kerry miser,' they call her—she's rich; she's got money in all the savin's banks that she's savin—tin thousand dollars, they say, and some says more. The house will be filled with bank books, they say, and some thinks she's got money there beside—stored up, after the old-fashioned way—in the toe of a stockin'—and hid away somewheres in a hole under the flur. She's been savin' that money for fifty years, workin' in the mill ever since it started—and livin' on tea and potatoes and storin' it away. Much good it'll do her. If she'd spint more of it, her own grandson wouldn't have been wanderin' around the face of the country as he is to-day."

"Where did you say he was, Maggie?"

"He's gone south, they say; that's all I knows."

The industrious Maggie had returned to her work as she was talking and sat sewing busily.

"Do ye remimber the toime yer father was in the

South?" she asked. "Of course ye don't; that was before ye was born—way back in the war toime. Let me see—'twas in 1864. I remember it because it was the same year my father died. Yer mother, poor woman, she'd be half crazy for fear somethin' would happen to him.

"Ivery day I'd foind her off by herself, where she'd think I wouldn't see her, weepin'."

"'Ah, Maggie' she'd say. 'Do ye think he'll ever come back?'

"'There, there,' I'd say to her, 'don't ye be worryin' yer pretty head; there'll be no danger where he's gone—just fer business.' Then she'd fall to cryin' fit to break her heart.

"'Ah, Maggie, Maggie,' she'd say. 'God bliss ye—ye're a good gurrl to me. But he'll niver come back—niver—niver.'"

Maggie laid down her work, with far-off memories in her eyes.

"Ah, there was the pretty gurrl for ye—yer mother. Sometimes I'd say to meself. 'Ye're the perfect image of her,—only darker,—but sure I mustn't be tellin' you this, it'll make you vain. I remimber the first day I saw her. I thought she must be an angel—honest I did.—I was a green young gurrl—just over. Oh, she was the loveliest thing you ever saw, with her pretty, pink face and her yellow hair, in a big white dress with big flowers on it—them's the days they was wearin' hoops. O, but she was a lovely gurrl.

"My, an' to think she's did these twenty years, and me livin' still. Will, will, it's the will of God."

She wiped a silent tear from her cheek; the eyes of the girl grew moist watching her. Dear old Maggie—that strong loving loyal soul, always the same—at birth, and life and death,—the nurse and comforter of her dead mother, the refuge and indulgent confederate of her childhood fears and enterprises, the sturdy friend of to-day—the one place where she could turn with absolute certainty for sympathy and aid—a sort of practical, workaday guardian angel, to whom she had gone ever since she was born.

The girl crept over and seated herself on the low stool beside her knees, as in the old days; a pretty picture in the first of the twilight, the strong rounded figure of the old woman with her firm, large hands in her lap, her seamed, vigorous face, with its smooth greyish hair parted straight through the centre, and the wrinkles pursing in at her eyes and mouth; and below her the brown-haired, slender, fresh-faced girl listening and musing, with her hands clasped about her knees. Around them lay the familiar setting of the darkening room, the geraniums in the window, the coal stove, the strong, bare chairs—a wholesome place, where wholesome people lived their daily lives.

They sat there longer than they thought,—the one loving to recall—the other always anxious to hear—that half familiar tale—the story of her father and her mother and their early life together; that romance which stirs your heart as will no other but your own; that strange, far-off time just before the dawning of your own existence, those imaginings of figures espe-

cially dear to you, in the happiest period of their lives—touched unconsciously with the colour of first childish memories, those little, mystical, uncertain pictures of the mind, which appear now, as they return to you, like glimpses of some pre-existence, entirely separate and apart from your own.

Suddenly Maggie's narration broke off.

"God bless ye," she said. "The mills are out and here's Barry come home, and me still talkin'."

Outside, Ruth saw the long black straggling lines from the mill; and nearer at hand, the little, silent man known to her solely as the husband of Maggie, was coming in at the gate.

"O, I'm awfully sorry," said Ruth. "I've kept you from getting his supper."

"O, that's all right, me darlin', he'll forgive ye. If he won't he'll have to; sure, I'll make him."

The girl had put her hat on and was hurrying toward the door.

"Don't drive the way ye come down," said Maggie. "Go round the other way. They say they've got the smallpox in the Hoodle."

"Have they?" cried Ruth. "Why, I hadn't heard of that. Are there many sick?"

"No, only one or two."

"Aren't you afraid you'll catch it here?"

"God bliss ye, no. We've had it before now over here."

"But you'll be careful, won't you?"

"Sure we will. Good-bye to ye, Miss Ruth."

“ Good-bye.”

The dog-cart hurried away home through the dusk and Barry Shea saw, with unconcealed impatience, his wife start vigorously to work at the foundation of his belated supper.

Chapter VIII

THE PESTILENCE

TOWARD the dingy end of Main Street, you see the sign of Cornelius J. Murphy above his grocery store, a most unpretentious place, with small and dusty show windows, a black door, with a clanking latch, and two dejected brownstone steps, worn deep with the long stream of shuffling feet that has passed over them. Along the edge of the sidewalk in front, the giant telegraph poles march solemnly down the street, and out and away from the little city into the great world—their wires tangled full of kites, horse-chestnuts on strings, and other joys of youth lost beyond the far bounds of wistfulness to their fond desires.

Across the littered road one sees the names of competitors—N. Phaneur and Pierre Malbeouf and F. X. Desroches; and now even that of J. Jaboweski, whose windows are cluttered full of garlands of garlic, and black sausage, and cheap oil, and mustard, and strings of little beadlike confections—various abominations pleasing to the heart of the unregenerate Pole. Here is the centre of the confusion of tongues, a place as crazy with strange peoples as the map of Europe; be-

hind is the Huddle, full of Poles and poor Irish; across, the Irish and Italians of the Patch; above, on the side hill, the French of Little Canada, with a few English and Scotchmen scattered here and there in various places.

In and out of Murphy's door passes the procession of shawled girls and women, of tottering men, reduced by age to the second childhood of family errand boy, bringing in their copper and silver and bearing off their little bundles along the silent, scornful line of young loafers fixed to the shining wall, between the store and Canty's saloon. Inside the dark little shop you may or may not see its proprietor—the silent Murphy—he is often gone, sometimes on politics, sometimes on business—but your eye will soon make out the grotesque figure of Jimmy Dineen, the clerk, behind his counter.

Now it may be that our factory towns produce no more human monstrosities than any others; yet at least, we notice them more; the rest of the population being in the mills or off the streets, while these pass continually beneath our eyes. They are in their way a feature of the town, as familiar as the jesters in an old time court—Billy, the dwarf, that square-bodied, doll-legged, bushy-headed, waddling three feet nothing; Tom, the dummy; Patsy, the scrofulous paralytic, with the lopping hand and the bent leg, and Jimmy, the spider. Everybody knows these by their first names.

If you watched the Spider hunching along beside the shelves into the dark recesses of the store, and swing-

ing his trailing legs across the counters on his sturdy arms, you would understand the justice of his naming. The boys appreciate it keenly. You can hear the packs about the corner almost any evening, tapping at the window, shrilling in ecstatic voice:—

“Jimmy the Spider,
He sat down beside her.”

Then out comes the Spider on his crutches to the door—“Cheese it; here he comes,”—a six-limbed, half-human thing, glaring in impotent rage up and down the empty street. The loafers shift their backs along the wall and jeer him.

The fear of the pestilence was in the air—not a panic, in any way, but a general sense of apprehension. Four cases in the Huddle and two suspects in Little Canada. Such things had got loose before; there was always the chance again, especially with the way they were jamming those “Polanders” into the Huddle—especially with old man Childs, that whiskered old dodderer, as agent of the Board of Health. There were distinct mutterings of dissatisfaction through the town. But then, he was Thorndike’s man; what were you going to do about it? It occurred to John Mayhew, in the enthusiasm of youth, that he would find out. He took his hat and started to make a call on Con. Murphy.

Here was the centre of the thing, certainly; as he passed the corner of the block, he saw, in a white patch of electric light on the side street, the red flag before one of the infected houses in the Huddle.

Incidentally, as he went by the loafers at the door,

he noticed that they seemed unusually alert and interested. One of them stood close in front of the line talking.

"They say the red-head's comin' up with Carney," he announced.

"Who told you so?"

"Well I heard it."

"I tell ye, by God, they've got somethin' on," he said, spitting vigorously to one side.

"Aw, me foot," said the scornful one lounging before him.

"Well, then, what's he comin' up here agin for, if they ain't? You bet your life he's workin' somethin' that's worth it."

Mayhew opened the door and stepped into the atmosphere of the grocery, with its miscellany of dry and sticky smells.

At the end of the counter, to the right, Con. Murphy—tall, gaunt, dark, with perpendicular lines in his smooth-shaven face; toothpick in his mouth, red-brown Fedora hat on the back of his head, lounged back against the shelving. Beyond him sat the Spider, on his high stool, his arms on the table, his bright eyes on the centre of the room. It was a dull time; no customers were in the store. In the chairs beside the empty stove, sat two "old timers"—Mike Finnegan, fat and rosy and round-headed, of suave and magnificent courtesy; old Bat Foley, the Methuselah of the Patch,—weazened, drooping, thin-legged, the dry pod of a man—grasping his black clay pipe between his denuded gums.

Con. Murphy pointed a silent finger toward them. They were talking old and ghastly things—the histories of the pestilences of earlier days.

“I was just tellin’ thim,” said Mr. Finnegan, recognising the new comer, “Here’s a mon,”—pointing gracefully with his pipe—“that reminds the toime of the plague; don’t ye, Bat?”

“Oi do,” said the pod, wagging its head.

“Sure he does.”

“Yis.”

“’Twas this way,” said Mike Finnegan, the entertainer, “I’ll till it to ye. The regular plague it was, the cholera, as some calls it. They got it workin’ in the first canal—the young min that come here first. Bould, boisterous divils, they was, with niver a heed for God or mon. They had their shanties along the canal, in a long strate, with few women and no praste, and one mornin’ they woke and the plague was on ’em. Some says that some of the new ones brought it with them from the old country. Some says ’twas the judgment of God on ’em. But wheriver it come from, it was there, and it niver left till it took the half of thim with it. O, it was terrible.

“How many was there died, now?” he said, bending toward old Foley.

“I dunno.”

“A hundred?”

“A hundred, yis, and more; yis, tin, twenty, fifty hundred,” said the old man wildly. “’Yis more, ’ye couldn’t count ’em. Tin thousand. Aw, how do I know? I don’t just remember, rightly. I saw ’em

with me own eyes setting there—like this—on the ground—” He trailed off into drowsy, indistinguishable brogue.

“He don’t remimber will, these days,” explained Mr. Finnegan. “But ’twas tirrible bad. They sat there in the strate, young boys, not mooch more, waitin’ and drinkin’ and drinkin’ and waitin’. They wouldn’t lit thim out. Ivry day they lift their food for thim outside, and ivery mornin’ they’d be standin’ outside the dure a dozen of ’em in boxes of old boards, put out by the rist, waitin’ for the cart; and all the strate would be white with the loime they’d thrown on it.”

“Loike winther oop and down,” ejaculated Bat Foley.

“Thin they’d take ’em up to the old cimetiry and bury in one grave—you’ll see it there now, if ye’ll hoont fer it—’twas always opin thin. And one day a man’d be as will an’ hilthy as ye are this day, an’ the nixt he’d be in there with the rist.”

“You remimber about Mooligan?” he demanded of the pod.

“Dan Mooligan? Yis.”

“Was he a strong mon?”

“He was—a grand big mon—and niver a spot or scale on him. I see him the day before he died.”

“Wan day he see him drivin’ by carryin’ the did, and the nixt he was in the cart himself, and another mon drivin’ him.”

“Yis, and whin oi asked him where was Mooligan, he says to me, ‘he’s ridin’ to-day.’ Yis, that’s what he s’id: ‘He’s ridin’ this day,’ he says.”

He wagged his head and went off into a low, chuckling, rambling, senile laughter, showing the two remaining yellow teeth upon his lower jaw.

"Thin, after that," said Mike Finnegan, "there come the ship faver in The Patch. Do you remember *that*, Bat?"

"What?"

"The toime of the faver?"

"The faver—do I remember it? Do I remember it?" quavered the other. "Could I forgit it? The did and the dyin' and the keenin' for the did. And ivery man they carried out black, ivry wan of them—loike a naygur. O Mother of God—loike a naygur—ivery day more—and we sittin' there and waitin' and the women cryin'. Ah, Holy Virgin—"

The memory of this horror had stirred this old phantom to the bottom of his dry soul; he lapsed again into incoherent mumblings.

"Thin there was the toime of the smallpox. Oi remimber that meself," said Finnegan. "It was tuk by some of the women in the old paper mill. Did ye niver hear of that? No?"

"Will, one day as the women were workin' in the rag-room they found some foine underclothin' there—lovely things they was,—I saw thim meself,—all lace and gathers and all sooch stoof—fit for the quane. So the women kept 'em out and smooled 'em home and wore thim. Shure they couldn't be thinkin' what'd anybody throw sooch lovely things away for. Before long they found out. They'd had the sores of dith in

'em, they'd been taken off some corpse—some foine lady did with the smallpox, no doubt.

"'Twas a long toime before they found out what they had; and thin it was iverywhere and iveryone was dyin'.

"Ah, they had it all over. There was wan Kerry woman, Harrigan her name was, who had a choild. that toime, and whin it was born, it come into the world with the smallpox on it, havin' taken it from its mother; and the both of 'em did together and they buried 'em at one toime.

"Ah, yis," he went on reminiscently, "and they had great toimes buryin' thim days, specially thim wild Kerries—The constables would try to kape 'em from havin' a public funeral, for fear they'd sprid the disease, ye see, and the Kerries 'd foight for it—Do you remember that, Bat?"

"Oi do."

"Sure, 'twas great toimes."

"It was. They wouldn't let us give 'em a dacint burial. But we showed 'em, be God."

"They did, with bricks and stones—min and women aloike."

"Yis, hurroo," piped the warlike ghost. "we did thot."

"And the women with stockin's, with stones in the toe of 'em."

"Yis, they all had 'em."

"And mad Mag was there, with the rist, ye say?"

"She was."

"She killed a policeman once in the old country—with stone in her stocking," explained old Finnegan.

"In the Dooblin riots, she did," quavered Methuselah—"a cop. Two min hild him while she strook him, and she fought here joost the same."

"But finally," continued Finnegan, "the constables would get the hearse and drive it off."

"Yis," said Bat Foley, "but we had our wakes joost the same; they'd niver dare coome down into the Patch in the noight toime."

The historian stopped a moment.

"Tell me," Mr. Finnegan went on, "will it sprid again, so, do ye think? No?"

"Yit it moight, ye can't till."

"It moight," conceded Con. Murphy.

"The Hoodle's a disgrace to the town with thim Polanders—the dirty divils," interpolated Bat Foley.

"All together in one pin, ye moight say. Stooock around in there loike clothespins in a basket, in thim little filthy houses."

"'Tis ould Soolivan's to blame," piped up Methuselah, "He owns the most of thim."

"No, 'tis Thorndike. He's the mon to blame for what happens in this town. Sure he could stop it if he wanted to, couldn't he?"

"He could."

"Will thin?"

"He's a hard mon, Thorndike," said Foley, nodding his head solemnly.

"What's it to him if a hundred of us dies?" inquired Finnegan.

"Will," he went on. "God help us if it gits started; there's moore of us than there was in the old toimes."

He got up. "It's toime we should be startin'," he said to old Foley.

Methuselah scuffled slowly to the door behind him.

"Good noight, min," he said, passing out.

"Good avenin' to ye," said the suave and finished Finnegan, waving his hand.

The noisy door shut after them.

"Well," said Mayhew turning to Murphy, after they had gone. "What do you really think? Will is spread?"

"It might."

"Is it as bad down there as they say?"

"I've been here twenty years and I never saw its equal."

"Well, how about this man Sullivan, that owns so many of the houses; can't you get at him?"

"No, you can't. I don't blame old man Sullivan so much, though he's a bad one. He's just gettin' the best he can out of his tenements. So he rents 'em to the Polanders—they're good pay, they always have the cash. I don't know but I'd do it myself."

"Who is to blame, then?"

"Well, in the first place, we haven't got any health ordinances that amount to anything; and in the second place, they don't live up to what they have got."

"That's what I thought," commented Mayhew.

"You'll never get that place cleaned out the way it should be until you get old Childs out of bein' agent of the Board of Health."

"What's the matter with our having a new agent—and some ordinances—clean the whole thing out?" said Mayhew enthusiastically.

No answer.

"Childs comes up for re-election week after next."

"Well?"

"Why can't we turn him out, and get somebody that's fit for it?"

Con. Murphy changed the position of his back on the shelves.

"You're a very young man," he said.

"That isn't what I asked you, Murphy. Why not?"

"Why not? Well, in the first place, you can't beat him. He's Thorndike's man; he'd get all the republican votes. In the second place, he'd have all the friends of Sullivan and men like him in the democrats. You couldn't get him out."

"I could try," said the young legislator.

"Yes, you could *try*," said Murphy, imperturbably.

"But I thought now when people were excited over this smallpox business, it might make a difference."

"You can't beat him," said Murphy, with the conviction of years of ward politics behind him. He passed on to a word of caution.

"I wouldn't mix into it if I was you," he said.

"You're a young man and you're just gettin' your start. There's no use of gettin' 'em down on you—especially Thorndike."

"Thorndike doesn't own me," said Mayhew bitterly.

"Don't be a fool," said Murphy. "You don't want to run against him till you have to. Nobody does."

Now I give you warnin' before you start. There's no use in battin' your head against a stone wall."

The sage advice of Con. Murphy fell on a rebellious ear. Youth is not the season of compromises. John Mayhew, walking home alone, pounded out the eternal logic of the thing. Here was this office, vital beyond exaggeration in this swarming, half-civilised population—drawn from a thousand open farms to the unsuspected dangers of congested tenements; and in it this old snuffling, incompetent, careless, lazy, truckling to the influential, the very exploiters of the population he should protect; a great spot of rust on a most critical part of the machinery of government. A murderer would do less positive evil in his life than this official of the city might easily accomplish in his negative way within a week or month. And as for Thorndike—what if he did not like it? He was sick of hearing of him; of the intimations he had that this town Colossus looked down with disfavour on him and his political paths. He owed Thorndike nothing. If he were responsible for the continuance of this thing—this mediæval, tyrannical, dead condition of affairs; if he sacrificed, even by oversight, the health and lives of these people, so much the more shame to him.

"I'll do it," said John Mayhew, political reformer, smiting the palm of his hand with his clenched fist. "This is a free country, William Henry Harrison Thorndike, and don't you forget it."

Chapter IX

AN ULTIMATUM

JOHN MAYHEW sat at his office window, staring disconsolately out. It was Sunday morning,—a raw, chilly, midwinter Sunday—black street with white borders, sloppy sidewalks, slaty skies. The foul and bedraggled spirit of depression brooded over the town, and settled in the staring vacancy of the streets. But now he looked up and saw the long line with their prayer books winding down the street from mass—the Irish in their prim and decent Sunday clothes; the French women with their elaborate velvet capes, and last of all the variegated procession of the newest people, the Poles—purple and orange and ghastly greens; flat pan-cake hats with roses that never were on land or sea, and hyacinths and little forests of ostrich plumes, stuck straight up from the crown. Here, in these squat, stolid Asiatic folk, with their slit eyes, high cheek bones and yellow, pasty skin, and their savages' lust for colour, the foreign invasion had reached its height.

John Mayhew at the window was aware of steps upon the stairway and the two serious eyes which fixed themselves upon the nape of his neck. He turned

about. General Barrett O'Hara, fresh home from mass, stood transfigured in the doorway.

"Come in, General," said Mayhew; "take a chair." His invitation was accepted.

One must undertake a recapitulation of General Barrett O'Hara, man and clothing, as seen on Sunday, with much diffidence. There is a certain I-know-not-what-ness about this notable public figure on that sacred day which eludes and baffles. His clothing is exactly the same—the same soft brown hat and pale brown overcoat, the same ample trousers with their extraordinary, wide-meshed plaid, wrinkling about his short legs—all a little more scrupulously brushed perhaps, a little more dandy in their arrangement, but still identical. His long white hair is more smoothly combed, his face fresh shaven, his yellow-white imperial more severely military, his eyebrows bushier, his warlike five feet six inches more threatening in aspect than at any other time. He attends the half-past ten o'clock mass as regularly as Father Flynn himself; he is one of its chief features, bearing with him his gold-headed cane, testimonial of Division 6, A. O. H., walking with the grand air to and from the church—an Irish king in exile, distributing slow and gracious courtesies among the people.

He sat now leaning on his cane, gazing at Mayhew.

"Cheerful weather," ventured Mayhew.

"Most foul and disagrayable," the General affirmed. The conversation halted.

"Have you seen the Boston paper to-day?" asked General O'Hara.

"No, what's in it?"

"They say it's got an article on the Fenians. If it has, I'm goin' to buy one after dinner, and I'll lave it here for you. You'll find it very interestin' redin'.

"Much obliged."

"I hope they've trated it with respect," observed the General, belligerently. "If they have not, I'll be obliged to communicate with the iditor; and it'll not be the first toime.

"They laugh to-day," he went on. "But there was one of the greatest and most unfortunate movements of modern toimes. Did ye ever hear 'em spake of the grand demonstraytion we had here?"

"I think so."

"'Twas the most tremendous rain in years, that noight. The grand parayde was overwhilmed in it; two hundred min in loine in the ilimintal fury, marchin' up and down, with the water drippin' from their devoted forms and niver a man flinched. There was patriotism for ye. Ginerall Sweeney was there in a carriage drawn by two snow-white horses, with grane ribbons flowin' from their broidles, a foine figure of a man, with the grand manner.

"'Ye'd be could, me foine byes,' he said, 'if ye'd had not yer brave Irish hearts to warm ye.'

"They cheered to the icho, where they stood, with the rain runnin' down their nicks, and the water from their ribbons paintin' their faces grane; and some of thim, who had thim chape hats, with the paysteboard meltin' and runnin' down the side of the hids.

"Ah, but inside the hall the meetin' was a grand

succiss, with the spakin' by Ginerall Sweeney and his staff, and the presintaytion of the beautiful silk insign to the company, by the Fenian sisterhood. Two thousand people sat enchanted by the impassioned oratory, and three thousand dollars was subscribed thin and there for the bonds of the Irish Republic."

General O'Hara was well launched upon his favourite theme.

"Ah, the year of 1866 was a dark and fatal toime for Ireland," he said reflectively. "Rain and misfortune followed it to the ind. A grand uprising—forty thousand brave byes in their shamrocks and grane ribbons riddy to cross the Canaydian frontier at the wink of the eye. And ginerals, ye ask? Ginerall Sweeney was a foine man and a grand lader, but there was others there, great figures of the Confideracy, their names would startle ye, come up muffled to the eyes, to lade the noble foight for Ireland. And thin all ruined by trichery, bloody trichery, and min we trusted loike brothers."

"Are you sure it was treachery?"

"I am. The power and infloonce of British goold. The brave fellows that stole away at the did of noight, leavin' their comfortable and lovin' homes, what did they discover waitin' for thim at St. Albans—'confusion worse confounded,' as the pote says,—no food, and two cases of old roosty muskets for firearms that the Fiji savages would despise to use,—not even a uniform, iviry one in linen dusters, men and officers, flittin' and flyin' here and there. 'Twas a disgrace the most stupendous in history. You may not appreciate,

niver havin' been to war, how mooch the martial spirit depinds upon the uniform. 'Tis recognised by the greatest military gayniouses in ivry age. Be God, me boy, I vinture to say, the ancient Greek thimselves would have hisitated on the sacred grounds of Marathon and Thermopylae, if they'd been compilled by fate to foight in linen doosters."

He marched on through his history of wrong—the confusion, the downfall, the gigantic quarrels at headquarters, the retreat—"Min offerin' one hundred dollars in Irish bonds for a meal, and gittin' nothin' but laughter thin." Ever since that disgraceful night at St. Albans, suspicions had never ceased to stalk abroad with General O'Hara. Cabals, conspiracies, yawning traps, foul and underground things, constantly surrounded this terrible little man, unseen to all but his own practiced eye.

"Trichery most foul and deliberate," he re-affirmed. "There was six of thim in it. They was discovered—Are they livin' now? Did they die a natural dith, any wan of thim? Aha, they did not. By accident and failure of the heart they wint—sudden and quick without the holy comforts of the dyin'. What made thim go so? 'Tis harrd to understand, unliss—unliss you *know*—"

Bloody mystery lay thick within his voice.

"Well, it's over now," said Mayhew, "anyhow."

"Over? Niver. Not while one drop of sparklin' Irish blood coorses in the veins of the countrymen of Wolf Tone and Robert Emmet. Over, did ye say? If 'twas over, would I have the positive engagement

I do ivry Saturday night. Ye'd heard yerself of the Clan-na-gael. Will, you remain still and listen. There's another day comin' and the flag of the Fenian sisterhood is waitin'—I have it in me own room above—some day its foolds may be unfoorled again—some day—”

He stopped. Strange steps were on the stairway, an unexpected visitor had come upon the scene. The straight, stiff figure of William Henry Harrison Thorndike stood upon the threshold.

“Good morning,” he said to Mayhew, with a scarcely perceptible nod.

“O, good morning, Mr. Thorndike,” said Mayhew self-consciously, knocking over his chair as he got up. “Won't you come in?”

The manufacturer advanced slowly into the room.

“How're you?” he said curtly to General O'Hara. This time there was no nod at all, and not the slightest change of expression in the hard, dark face. The insolent coldness of the ruler showed in every movement. He sat down slowly by the desk and for an instant looked under lowered eyelids at the general.

“I'll have to excuse meself, gintlemin,” said that polished man of the world.

There was an awkward pause as he went.

“I came here,” said Thorndike at last, “to speak to you about this Board of Health business.”

“Yes?”

“How far are you going with it?”

“What do you mean, Mr. Thorndike?” The faint resonance of a challenge sounded in Mayhew's voice.

"Are you going to try to throw out Childs?"

"Yes, we are."

"I understand you are going to bring in some new health ordinances too."

"Yes."

There was a striking difference between the two men and their position—the older, cold, deliberate, confident; the younger with an odd combination in his face of diffidence and determination; a distrust of his own strength and an inbred respect for the power of the other, mingled with anger and native independence and resolution of character.

Thorndike slowly slid a paper knife on the desk between his thumb and forefinger.

"Well," he said, in his dry, hard voice. "I advise you to drop it."

"Why?" asked Mayhew stiffly.

"Why, because it's the best thing you can do. You can't beat Childs, in the first place."

"We can try."

"Yes, you can try; that's all you can do."

"Then what did you come up here for?"

"To stop this infernal agitation of the thing. All this talk about the dangerous condition of the tenements does not amount to anything, because it isn't true, in the first place; but it tends to keep these people stirred up and excited by giving them the idea that somebody's abusing them. Now all I want you to do is to stop agitating the thing, and it will die a natural death. That's all. Will you do it?"

"I don't believe I can, Mr. Thorndike."

"Now here," said the manufacturer, still more coldly, "you don't want to make any mistake. This is no theory; this is straight fact. I came up here with a simple business proposition, and it concerns you a good deal more than it does me. You can't beat Childs, anyway. I can promise you that, now. But if you keep up this agitation much longer you can just about ruin yourself."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean what I say. A young lawyer in a small town like this can't afford to make enemies. I'm just giving you a little warning. If you don't drop this thing, you're liable to get dropped yourself."

"In other words," said Mayhew hotly, "if I don't do the way you want me to in politics, you'll boycott my business."

"You can call it what you want to. The fact is that men don't give law business to their enemies; you know that as well as I do; and if you come in to this place and antagonise all the decent people here, for the sake of a little cheap notoriety among a lot of damned ignorant Irishmen, you'll either leave the town or you'll starve to death. That's what'll happen."

At this crisis, affairs took a strange and unexpected turn. The office door opened suddenly and General Barrett O'Hara projected himself vehemently into the conversation.

"I'll stand here no longer, be God, and hear my young frind insulted," he exclaimed.

"What were you standing there for at all?" demanded Thorndike.

Naturally, certainly, some suspicion seemed to direct itself against General O'Hara. He repudiated it at once.

"Stand where?" he said loftily, "I don't understand ye. As I was passin' the dure of my young frind here I heard yer vilent and tyrannical language to him and I come in.

"Don't you pay any attention to him," he went on to Mayhew. "Let him do what he wants to. Be God, the ignorant Irish'll stand by ye. They get into police court occasionally, anyhow, if nothin' else. Ah, ye can't terrify me, nor any of yer minions of plutocracy. Be God, there's wan man in this town that ye don't own or control."

The mill owner arose and turned his back to the speaker.

"It isn't necessary," he said addressing Mayhew, "for me to say anything further. You understand the matter perfectly now."

"Yes."

"I advise you to think it over and let me hear from you."

The face opposite the manufacturer's was fixed and rigid now; its eyes met his firmly and angrily.

"You needn't wait; you won't hear from me. I'm not going to change my mind."

"Very well then, that ends it. Good day."

"Good day to ye," said General Barrett O'Hara sarcastically as the door closed after him.

The two occupants of the room listened in silence to his firm and deliberate steps upon the stairs.

"'Tis a foul and damnable outrage," exclaimed General O'Hara, when they had died away. "He threatened you with the entire destruction of your business if ye didn't detract your misure. Be God, I'll expose him."

"Expose nothing. What would you expose?"

"I'd expose him for illegal infloocene on an alderman, for the improper infloocene of legislation—for usin' threats and vilence."

"He'd say he didn't threaten, he only came up and warned me for my own good. That's what he did do really."

"Will, I'll expose him."

"No, you won't."

"There's a conspiracee here," hissed General O'Hara.

"O, no, I guess not, General," said Mayhew indulgently.

"Ye mark me words; there's conspiracee in progress."

"I'm afraid you can't prove it, General."

"Will, anyway, be God, me bye, don't ye be discouraged. Ye'll have nothin' to regrit. The Irish'll stand by ye. With the infloocene of meself and me frinds you won't want for practice."

"Much obliged to you, General," said Mayhew. He was a little anxious to be rid of the demonstrative friend. He wanted to be alone. All of a sudden it occurred to him he must already be overdue for dinner at home.

"You'll have to excuse me, General," he said, "but I'll have to go home to dinner now."

They parted on the stairway, the General still inveighing against the tremendous wrong which was threatening his young friend.

Mayhew went across the street with his head down, angrily canvassing the matter. He recalled all he had heard of Thorndike's iron rule—the intimations of Skeane and Carney, the shrewd warnings of Murphy. William Thorndike was master absolute of Ellington. And now he himself had crossed the purposes of the ruler and defied him and was marked for sacrifice or banishment.

There was one question which never even presented itself to the mind of the young man—the possibility of retreat. If Thorndike wanted to force a fight he should have it. The whole character of his opponent assured this; the whole training of American youth to give and take in silence; that cardinal point of honour in every boy's chief education—the education by his peers in the stern social organisation of boyhood and youth,—never to seek a fight, but never, without exception, to shirk it when forced upon you.

Yet there was something more than this mere instinct of resistance, which presented itself to Mayhew's mind, with more or less definiteness—he was fighting for a perfectly reasonable, and almost necessary social improvement; against him was an entirely selfish, arbitrary, and irresponsible force, which needed—if there was ever need of discipline in the world—to be beaten and called to account. The other men, who had been

swept aside by it, rose before his mind. Possibly he, with his better education and family and opportunity, with the force of public opinion in this matter, might have success where they had failed; might justify the right of the individual against the great god of the commercial machine. At any rate, it was a thing well worth while trying for; and a thing to awake some enthusiasm in the trying.

The situation at best was scarcely cheerful for the young man, yet there was a certain element of grim humour in it for him, as he thought it over. The stilted wording of a boyish lesson in political economy rose unbidden into his mind: "A republic is a form of government where the sovereign power resides with the people, each individual being guaranteed the right to act politically as he chooses."

He was half way up the Hill now; a sleety snow had begun to fall from the dirty, grey sky. He stopped a moment to look back over the town. At the right rose the dull, brick ramparts of the mill, at the left the Hill; between them in a semicircle rose the slate roofs of the old, brick tenements, with their stiff rows of dormer windows; the little houses of the Patch and the dirty wooden mass of the Huddle down below. There in that silent, crowded place, were the working people—thousands of them,—recruiting in one day of sodden rest, the strength for the coming six days' crude and brutal labour; the peasantry of this later time, ranged in the plain—working, sweating, marrying, dying, unnoticed and unknown. And here above them watched the big house of the owner of the mill.

It came to him suddenly as he stood looking—there it was all over again—master and churl, the lord and his retainers, feudalism returned—the hard, industrial feudalism of New England. We prate of freedom, and fellow citizenship and the rights of man, but there the real relation stands typified, where all who have eyes may see. A pretty atmosphere truly for the growth of political freedom! He turned and walked along muttering the old formula.

“A republic is a form of government in which the sovereign power resides in the people, each individual being guaranteed the right to act politically as he chooses.”

The quotation made him smile. His first few lessons in practical politics were teaching him a number of things, which did not appear in textbooks.

Chapter X

AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION

IN the sombre east chamber of the Thorndike house, a certain dainty apparition stood before the great melancholy glass in the blackwalnut bureau, engaged in the white mysteries of changing her dress for the afternoon.

"The way he has been acting about this thing is perfectly disgraceful," she affirmed, stabbing her hair viciously with her hairpins. "Perfectly disgraceful. The idea of his trying to throw out that poor old Mr. Childs from his position—all on account of a theory."

She turned her slender neck with a quick, free naiad grace, to observe her handiwork. Apparently she was satisfied with the effect. Indeed she had exceptionally good reason to be.

"He's grown to be a crank," she continued. She talked like a person heroically determined to convince herself by brute force, of something she could never really hope to believe in any event. "For that matter, look at the way he talked to me that afternoon—coming—home—from—the—Dibbles."

The remembrance of this made her suddenly

thoughtful. She turned all at once and established herself, elbows on knees, on an old ottoman beside her, with that pretty flexibility which allows a young woman to adapt herself gracefully to the most impossibly low seats.

"I wonder if he really knows what he is talking about," she asked, and lapsed into the depths of thought again.

"I believe I'll go and see for myself," she exclaimed all at once.

The idea seemed eminently practical.

"I will," she said decidedly, springing up.

"Now what dress shall I wear? Let—me—see. My felt sailor and blue serge—"

Fifteen minutes later the explorer appeared, accoutred according to the most exact ideals in explorers' costume, and the tour had begun. She had added a thick blue veil as a final precaution.

"There," she said securely, "no one will recognise me in *that*."

There was really little danger to have been expected from Miss Ruth Thorndike's visit to the Huddle. The epidemic had already burned itself out; and the Huddle, while not the most agreeable place in the world, is not to be considered dangerous, like a city slum. However, if it had been, there is reason to suspect that it would not have interfered greatly with the enterprise now under way.

If William Thorndike, who was in New York that afternoon, had heard of the project, he would not have been entirely enthusiastic. His absence added ma-

terially to the ease of carrying it through. Miss Ruth Thorndike started out independent and alone to conduct her investigations.

Her ideas of what she was going to investigate were perhaps not exactly definite; she merely wanted to learn in general as much as possible of this much reviled section. All her early life, of course, before her years at school, she had lived in the town, and travelled no end of times through the main streets of the tenement district. But all this time she had seen only the most superficial side; and even that, with a woman's instinct to escape the sight of misery and pain, she had avoided as much as possible. Now she would see everything she could. Being a young woman of resources, she had her excuses for penetrating the district carefully worked out.

In some ways you may hate to think of her visit there that afternoon—in many ways you must be glad—for herself, and, somewhat at least, for the people whom she visited. When she went there, she was merely a girl, with all her instincts and beliefs and thinking hedged carefully within the small circumference of her own little class. When she came out, one need not say she was a woman; changes so great do not take place in one afternoon; but she took away a woman's insight; a woman's deep, painful, sincere sympathy in the life of the people.

You can imagine the explorer—a slight, elastic, youthful figure, with something still of the abandon of the young girl in its movements, passing down by the brick tenements, down O'Connell street, by Emmet

Park, and the Row to the place of smeared doorways, of the swarms of sticky-faced children and the sound of the nasal voices of women calling and cursing in the windows. It was a blue-skyed day on the threshold of early spring; occasional enterprising boys were already playing marbles on the feasible places in the drying sidewalks. The old men sat sunning on the benches in Emmet Park—small-featured, soft-mannered little persons with pink cheeks, and side whiskers and mild blue eyes; the fat, apoplectic, bullet-headed hulks of men, whom you see in summer time lolling in the windows of the tenements, in their black shirts and white suspenders, gasping for air—the broken labourers of the mills, put out like old horses to the idleness of their last pasturage. Across from them, along empty lots, marched the procession of the billboards—the filthy billboards, with their thick-thighed, leering women from the burlesque shows; alluring displays of the fat wares in the meat markets of the devil; the dirty dangers of a melodramatic opium den; a black-bearded villain, strangling a loose-haired woman in the dim blue atmosphere of early morning hissing a disgusting phrase. These billboards, I say, are advertisements of something more than they are meant to be. After all we are getting what we want in the long run. There they stand, calling out the character of our desires to all men—screaming them aloud, you might say, here in Ellington.

Miss Ruth Thorndike, marching by these allurements, turned at last into the meagre dirty side street, where the Huddle faces. You can imagine

what a woman saw first there—the children, the unsteady mites, wrapped in old coats, with trailing tails and sleeves, the little girls on their errands, small thin legs parading under a dingy shawl, from which emerged a pail of beer; the small boys in old clothes and broken shoes, forever haunted by the terrible consciousness that they wore in the sight of all men, their mother's cast off striped stockings. Then there were the women, the fat old figures in aprons, with their skirts tilted up by their monstrous and unnatural grossness; the thin ones, with one bony hand gripping the shawl at their lean necks; grotesque figures all of them, no doubt, and picturesque to the vision of a man, but to the eyes of a sensitive and sympathetic woman, painful, first and always—painful, and shocking, saddening—sights she cannot drive from her memory.

The investigator passed slowly by several of the yellow wooden buildings, slackening occasionally to look into the cold and sordid tenement stairways, with their dirty and uneven floors, the broken places in the plastering like great unhealed sores on the walls, the long, dirty lines above the stairs, where the children go and the men come groping unsteadily up late Saturday nights in the darkness. She turned at last and stepped briskly into a doorway.

The deep voice of a woman answered her knock. "Come in."

She stepped into the damp, close atmosphere of the room, redolent with the odour of past meals and of human bodies. It was a front room, half filled with the bed in one corner, and darkened by lowered shades,

a place reserved by night for sleeping and by day for the more formal social functions.

"Does Mary Macey live here?" she asked, the big woman standing in the doorway of the back room.

"No, she don't," said the woman.

"That's funny," said her caller innocently. "Could you tell me where she does live?"

"Mary Macey? I niver heard of her; I don't believe there's anybody named that around here."

"I'm very sorry to have troubled you."

"O, niver moind."

"I suppose you were all pretty badly scared by the smallpox last month," Miss Thorndike lingered to say in her most engaging manner.

"Will yis, I suppose we were," said the woman, uncompromisingly.

"You're all so close together here."

"Yis."

"An they said then, didn't they, that there were a good many complained that the tenements weren't very good here?"

"Will, thin, they're bad enough, if you want to know that. Old Soolivan would never fix them unless he had to—and there's nobody that'll make him. There was some talk of somebody's doin' that a while ago, but they say that's over now."

"What's the worst fault with them?"

"Everything—the sinks are bad for one thing, and the cillars—they're so wit you can't use 'em. Thin there's the dirty Polanders in back; it's a disgrace the way they live—a dozen in a room, min and women to-

gither, loike rats in a nist. It's a wonder we ain't all did long ago.

"Will, thin, what were you lookin' for—a gurr!?" said the woman questioning in her turn.

"Yes."

"Will, I guess you won't foind any Mary Macey here." The woman turned, with an air of dismissal, toward the back room.

Ruth Thorndike found herself again in the hallway, with her desire for information still unquenched.

She decided at once to continue the campaign and pushed boldly upstairs, where she soon engaged a thin and faded younger woman in a similar conversation about the imaginary Mary Macey. This time she was in the back room with its stove and black wooden chairs and oilcloth covered table,—comfortless, pictureless, utterly without ornament, except for the luxuriant row of geraniums in their tin cans at the windows. This woman seemed more communicative.

The investigator was securing a somewhat detailed inventory of her troubles when the door suddenly opened and there appeared on the threshold the large body from below.

"Don't ye talk to her, Mrs. Harrigan," she said.

"What is it ye want?" she asked suspiciously. "Didn't I tell ye there was no Mary Macey livin' in this house? Who are ye?"

Miss Thorndike did not reply.

"Are ye ould Soolivan's daughter? If ye are ye can git out; we pays our rint."

The humour of the situation struck Miss Thorndike.

"No, I'm not," she said, "I came here myself, because I wanted to see if the tenements were as bad as they said. I thought may be if they were I could help get them fixed up."

"Thin why didn't ye say so at first?" said the fat woman scornfully, "instid of comin' here wid yer lies, and Mary Maceys to get into honest people's houses without bein' asked. You help! We'll git along widout the help of such as you. Ye'd better git out anyway."

Miss Thorndike proceeded to the street with as much dignity as was allowed, feeling half angry and wholly foolish. What *was* she there for, anyway? What right had she to invade the premises of other people on a pretext of this sort? Her expedition began to appear in a somewhat peculiar light. But she would not retreat yet; that wasn't her habit. She passed along the street looking back into the yards, with their jumble of still other dingy yellow houses facing the backs of the first tenements. In these were the Poles, and most of the places were tenanted now only by the keepers of the boarding houses, all the rest of their population being crowded into the mills at work. She did not invade the courtyard; instead she continued down along the first row of houses. At the blind end of the street, where a high, unpainted fence protected the back of a lumber yard, she came across one building more bedraggled than the rest, older and more infirm and entirely dejected.

For a moment she hesitated before it, and then went in. This time she would begin upstairs to avoid re-

peating the complications at the other place. In fact, she saw no sign of occupancy below. The halls, she noticed as she stepped inside, were more hideous here than any she had seen; there was plaster off the ceiling; the steps of the stairway tipped to one side, and an accumulation of old dirt formed a soiled dado on all the walls. She knocked in the upper hall, first on one side and then on the other. There was no response. Evidently there was nobody there. She gave a little shudder of disgust as she looked at her surroundings. It was an evil, little, dirty pocket, with a blank wall at one end, and a prison-like window at the other, looking out into the empty Polish courtyards. She decided to go down.

As she started there was a noise below—clump—came a heavy body up against the lower stair. One of the beasts was coming up into his burrow, a lurching bundle of old clothes on the steps. She could not pass him there; she waited anxiously at the landing for him to go by her. The drunken man did not see her until he had nearly reached the top.

"Hello," he said stupidly, "Who are you? What do you want?"

Miss Ruth repeated her foolish little lie for the last time, "I'm looking for a Miss Mary Macey," she said faintly.

"She don't live here, said the man with the dirty moustache.

"No, I know she doesn't, so I'm going home now."

She started downstairs.

"Hol' on," said the beast.

The girl's slight body stiffened. "Let me pass," she said in a clear high voice, starting to go by him again.

"No, yer don't," said the other, lurching before her.

"Let me pass," she repeated.

"Lemme pass," he mocked her. "I'll let you pass all right when I'm ready to."

He bent and looked furtively down the stairs; evidently there was no one in sight. Then he advanced to the head of the pocket in the wall, the girl retreating before him. There they stood, met by an untoward chance in this dirty corner—Beauty and the Beast in the lair of the Beast. A shudder of physical repulsion passed over the dainty body of the girl, from the soles of her small feet to the nape of her white neck—as she looked into the face of this foul thing with the red veins in his eyes and the tobacco-stained stubble on his chin.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Are you going to let me pass?" she repeated.

"No, I ain't, not till I git ready. What you want?"

In response the girl began drumming noisily on the panels of the side door.

"That's right; bang away," said the Beast. "There ain't nobody there." The girl stopped pounding.

"I tell you what I'll do," proposed the Brute playfully. "You kiss me and we'll call it square." He lurched against the side wall, evidently growing drowsy with his drink.

"Well," he said, "are you comin'?"

The girl, passing the situation rapidly over in her mind, determined upon immediate action.

"I'll come," she said in a low voice, advancing slowly toward him. Then of a sudden she sprang toward him, struck both palms with all her might in his face, and swerved to one side, calling for help.

The blow pushed him backward and against the wall and nearly threw him down, but before she had entirely passed him, he had caught her by the sleeve of her coat.

A tall thin man, with a brown hat, came up the stairs in three bounds, and had the Beast by the arm.

"What are you tryin' to do here, John Haggerty," said the tall man angrily.

"Thas all right—what I'm tryin' to do," said the man with confused dignity.

"Drop her sleeve and go on."

"Thas all right," said the Brute. "I was jus havin' some fun. She's like the rest of 'em; she likes it, what she up here for if she duzn't?"

"Shut up, Haggerty, and go on."

"Be God, who'll make me shut up?" said the Beast bristling. "You won't, Con. Murphy."

The tall man wasted no more words. The Beast went down in a wrinkled heap under his first blow, and rolled over, without attempting to rise.

"Come on, Miss," said the tall man, leading the way down stairs.

"You don't feel faint, do you?" he asked solicitously.

"Not a bit," said Miss Ruth Thorndike pluckily. The statement might not have been exactly in accordance with fact, but she did her best to live up to it.

An aproned audience, attracted by the noise of the fracas, beheld them depart from the neighbouring doorways, and windows, with audible and sarcastic comments. Ruth Thorndike realised that she was not a very heroic figure. Her grand tour of exploration had ended in this soiled and sordid adventure, and here she was being led back home again, like a small child discovered wandering and solemnly escorted back to safety by some benevolent adult.

"My name is Murphy," said the rescuer. "I keep a grocery store down here a little ways."

"Mine is Thorndike—Ruth Thorndike."

"Yes, I know. I saw you when you first came down into the street."

"O, yes," said Ruth faintly.

"I'll just take you over to the store and send for your team," said Murphy.

"Thank you very much."

"I came down here," Ruth explained after a little pause, "because I wanted to see what the Huddle was like."

"Yes?"

"I suppose I ought not to have done it."

"You might have better asked somebody who knew about it," said the grocer cautiously.

"I suppose you've been here a long time?" ventured Ruth.

"For twenty years."

"I wish you'd tell me about it," said Ruth in her frank manner.

All the way to his store, the taciturn grocer, suddenly moved to playing the gallant, rehearsed the history of the Huddle—the daily life of twenty years seen by going in and out among the people—things which could not be learned in a thousand exploring expeditions.

"And do you think that they ought to pass those new health ordinances?" asked Ruth.

"It would help some, anyway. There'll never be any changes made there till somebody compels 'em to be made.

"And Mr. Childs—do you think he ought to have been beaten?"

"Well, yes, honestly speakin', I do."

"O, I'm sorry," said Ruth.

"Well, I'll tell you, Miss, if they passed the ordinances and somebody went to him and told him he'd have to see they were enforced—like your father, for instance, I think he'd be all right, maybe," said the shrewd grocer.

His remark remained fixed in the memory of the girl, as he intended.

They arrived soon at the dark, little grocery store. A boy was dispatched to the Thorndike house and Ruth was ensconced on the stool behind the high desk at the rear end of the counter. Here she watched, half concealed, the poor little traffic of the place,—the shawled women and the children and the old men, straggling in and out.

For a short time the grocer stood beside her, his inevitable brown hat removed and held in his hand, as a one last testimonial of respect, answering her questions. He was eventually called away by the duties of the store. Jimmy Dineen constantly referred to him on the subject of credits.

"Do you lose much by trusting them?" asked Ruth.

"No, not much—not from the Irish. The French are a little different. You've got to watch them some."

A small, white-faced woman in a black shawl came up and whispered earnestly to him, apparently on the verge of tears.

"Let her have what she wants, Jimmy," said the grocer, in his dry voice.

"God bliss ye, Con. Murphy," said the woman, going out with her parcels, "May ye niver know what trouble is."

"He's givin' it to her, ye might say. She ain't got a cent," whispered the Spider, to Ruth in explanation.

"Does he do that much?" asked Ruth.

"Does he? O no, he don't—never."

"He's a good man, isn't he?" said Ruth softly.

"You're right he is; there ain't many like him. They don't say anything against Con. Murphy, not whin I'm around," said the hunchback ferociously, "If it wasn't fer him, where'd I be? I'd been starved long ago."

"Your horse is come, Miss," said Con. Murphy from the door. Ten minutes later she was back again in

her room, seated in the same old place, as if all that afternoon's adventures had never been.

"He said I didn't care," she said to herself, musing. "But I do. I'll *show* him!" she continued, getting up energetically.

"You look tired, Ruth," said William Thorndike after dinner.

"Do I?" asked Ruth, innocently.

"Where have you been? What have you been doing this afternoon?"

"I've been down to the Huddle," said Ruth, rather incoherently. "And O, Dad, the poor little children. You will have them pass the ordinances, won't you?"

She broke down a little then; the strain of the afternoon had been pretty severe on her feelings.

"I'm a little fool," she cried, recovering herself abruptly. Then she went on describing her experiences and outlining her political designs.

"You're quite a politician," said William Thorndike, with his sombre smile.

"Am I?" asked Ruth, vivaciously.

"But you'll do it, won't you?" she persisted.

"I'll do what I can," he promised.

"Thank you, Dad," she said simply.

"They say family influence and favoritism cause more corruption than any one thing in American politics," said Thorndike, pinching her cheek.

"Don't be foolish, Dad," said the successful lobbyist.

Chapter XI

IN THE HALLS OF LEGISLATION

THE fight was on—John Mayhew, openly straining to defeat William Thorndike's protégé in the Board of Aldermen; Thorndike, in secret, hunting down Mayhew financially through his business. The cold-blooded promptness of the counter attack took the young man's breath away. He felt the change immediately after that first warning. The practice of the national bank—perhaps the best in the city outside the mill itself—a business which he coveted, and bits of which he had already had from time to time, he learned was to be taken entirely by an older man in Grimdale; two or three of the larger stores, whose collections he had had, now gave this work to a collection agency; the occasional calls he had had from the office of the stocking factory ceased entirely. Behind it all he dimly discerned the silent form of Thorndike, manipulating his puppets; the creatures of his making who stood before the public as the heads of the various local enterprises. Thorndike was the managing influence at the bank, the backer of the merchants, a large owner in the smaller factory; yet everything happened most naturally and

artistically. Not the slightest intimation of his influence appeared upon the surface. But all at once Mayhew realised that the greater and better part of his practice had been cut away; that the cold gripe of the commercial machine clutched him and held him helpless. He was amazed at the power of his antagonist, and somewhat disheartened; but he was still more angry at the cool brutality of the thing, and his first resentment extended not only to Thorndike, but to his daughter.

Ruth Thorndike was in New York again absorbed to the full extent of her senses with the excitements of the metropolis. A week before the collarless young men along the wall, who guard our dingy gateway into the world, had stolidly observed her embark—with her big trunk, and her new travelling suit and hat and her spirited and joyous gestures of farewell to her father, and pass out of the dull confines of the town in a perfect rose coloured cloud of vacation expectancy.

She had known something of her father's dispute with Mayhew before she started; indeed her father, in his first anger over the matter, had even intimated that it would be well for her not to see Mayhew any more than was necessary. "I shall see whom I please," said his unnatural child, with an unusually brilliant flash of her quick temper. Whereupon, reflecting upon the enormity of her sin in private, she had become deeply conscience-stricken and had snubbed Mayhew viciously, as a crowning bit of feminine consistency, whenever and wherever she met him. At first of course she had no doubt that her father had

been right in the matter, as in all other things political and financial; and now when she was inclined to waver, she held to her attitude toward Mayhew for mere pride's sake. She was glad to escape from the problem to New York.

Mayhew, of course, was in no position to understand the path of her reasoning or the promptings of feminine remorse. He merely knew that she was cold and distant, and had apparently taken up her father's cause against him. He was angry and disappointed with her. She was like the rest of them, then—a product of her class.

He went over the subject in his mind again—with the zeal of his new political heresy and the heat of his personal resentment. The manufacturers—perfectly irresponsible forces; above the laws, making and unmaking and overriding them as they liked—gathering where they chose, from the uplift of the craftily devised tariff on the one side; and the brutal forcing down of wages with cheap imported labour on the other; scattering where they would,—a few libraries and cast-iron soldiers' monuments, memorial tablets—all for their own glory and honour. No more arbitrary or medieval power held an ancient province in its grip than these petty princes of industrialism their little towns.

They made their women, of course what they wanted them to be—attractive, careless, unsympathetic, ignorant, sheltered from every inclement human experience; every vital everyday human knowledge. They trained them in their fashionable “finishing

schools" like the children of a provincial nobility, in graceful uselessness—dancing, manners, and the tinkling piano—and called that education. They gave them their little institutional charities, old human pets to nibble favours from their fingers, the tame and domesticated poverty of an old women's home, and called that benevolence. These women knew as little of the real dirty, savage, poverty of the people around them, as of the tribes of the South Seas.

Ruth, then, was a representative of this class! There are some apparently logical propositions, John Mayhew, which no amount of bitterness will allow us to quite believe!

In the meantime, Mayhew's campaign against Thorndike's official had met with ignominious defeat. The public spirit to which he looked for support, if it had ever existed, promptly melted away with the disappearance of the smallpox—returned to that limbo of insufficient and still-born things, where the public spirit of American cities inhabits. Old Childs had been elected with an ease which more than justified William Thorndike's confidence. The aldermen, with that bovine dignity which was their chief charm, had heard Mayhew's plea to the end, and voted calmly against it. An old official in a small city is entrenched in something more than political influence—the individual sympathy of his electors. As the portly alderman from Ward One said, after hours, with crushing logic, "You'll be old yourself, sometime, young man."

Now there were real influences against the new ordinances—the owners of the private tenement district,

working steadily and secretly against a direct drain in their individual pockets for improvements. But this measure went through, and with a vote to spare. Mayhew did not quite understand it.

Yet there were a great many things about the members of the city government which Mayhew did not understand and probably never will—about their plans, and ambitions, and prejudices, race and personal and class; and the motives that appealed to them. The aldermen in particular—there alone was a two-semester's feast for an ethnologist; all sorts, of course, in different years, but mostly at that time two factions—the stiff old stubborn Yankee stock, and the heavy men of the Irish; both belligerent, obstinate, crafty—glaring at each other across each innocent paper that was committed to the keeping of the city clerk. Individually considered it was always amusing; grotesque and humourous, and in a way pathetic. There they sat, with their odd, provincial clothes, and their odder grammar and brogue and patois, and their queer, crooked outlook on things, warped by their uncouth inheritance of race and their hard and narrow life; the representatives of the average choice of the people, teetering back and forth in their spring chairs, under the halo of electric lights; wearing with a decent and sober complacency the crowning glory of a little life, worked for with who knows what petty desperation.

Above them, on his ingrain carpeted dais, sat the mayor—the retired coal dealer, elected, contrary to all hope, by the republicans in the fall—a heavy, grey old New Englander—with a white Mosaic beard, some-

what obstinate, always confused, always craning over his desk in some appeal for instruction from the city clerk. Around him, in a semicircle, the aldermen rode their leather-seated chairs—the enormous butcher from Ward One, with the intolerable faint smell of meat on his fat fingers; side whiskers, most wantonly false teeth, immaculate Sunday clothes, wagging his head contemplatively up and down during the debate, like a child's mechanical ox; the heavy-weight Irish contractor, with a bullet head, who always made the motion to adjourn, after an evening's silent fingering of his pen; the milkman from the suburban ward, with dyed side whiskers, worthy patron of the local grange; a thin and hard-faced Scotch foreman in the mill, a French doctor, with a beard and hair black as a Newfoundland dog's; Mayhew himself; and last of all Skeane—crafty, subtle, jeering, always making for some unseen end, always befuddling and confusing and overreaching the chairman and the fat opposition in the board.

Dr. N. Archambault, that solemnly vivacious French statesman, is his particular dupe. How often he falls into some fatal trap in this treacherous English language; some indirectly-worded motion, which obtains through Skeane's gross and unnatural fraud, his ballot for the side that he most strenuously loathes and detests. The vote is taken; his friends have lost, and here stands the French orator again, amazed, aghast, awry.

"Gentlemen," he gasps, "thees is a shame; thees is not raight. Gentlemen, it is *too* bad. I have al-

ways intend other-wise. I have not understand. I must move the reconsideration. I have great shame. I beg your pardon, gentlemen,—a thousand taimes.”

He glares at the unconscious Skeane and sits down again.

It is scarcely surprising that Mayhew should begin to shine in such company, and be mentioned in the city affairs second only to “King” Skeane himself. What he said was at least dictated by logic and not by prejudice; he could talk clearly and grammatically, if not with much eloquence. He had some grasp of the general business, and his measures had all attracted some attention, in spite of the defeat of the chief one. Moreover, he was the son of an old family, a name that everybody knew, and a democrat—a combination which was unusual. Whatever might be his difficulties in his private affairs, John Mayhew was becoming a very eligible person from a political standpoint.

But if Mayhew secured some standing in the upper board, what shall we say of our rising young fellow citizen, Brian Haitch Twohig, in the lower? Ever and again, as the messenger passed to and fro between the chambers, gusts of his oratory and invective came through the open door. His perorations, his defence of all that was best and most rigid in parliamentary practice, his tremendous massing of Blackstone, and Shakespeare and Tom Moore in debate were at once the wonder and despair of the board. Never once did it adjourn before the aldermen; generally it was half an hour behind, a half hour, as conceded by Mr. Twohig’s worst enemies, full of graceful waving

of the legal eyeglass, of slow but keen questioning, of elucidation and exposition, of fiery Celtic oratory.

At the head of the board sat Henry Allen—the foreman of the machine shop—that acid little old Yankee, with a white brush-broom whisker, a personage, as Mr. Twohig himself so justly remarked, impervious to the highest flights of the imagination; anxious, after the manner of crabbed old age, for an early bed and a good night's sleep. The antagonism between these opposing forces became awful. From the beginning, the sessions were continually punctuated with the solemn rising of Mr. Twohig and his measured calls to "Mr. Prisidint." He found increasing difficulty in securing the attention of the chair.

"Mr. Prisidint," he said, and started on his speaking, "Mr. Prisidint, I—"

"You ain't got the floor," said the high and angry voice of the chairman. "There's somebody back of you talkin'." Apparently there was collusion in this. Yet Mr. Twohig gracefully retired. Not once did this happen, but many times. In the midst of plucking the choicest fruits from the gardens of his fancy, he was rudely interrupted.

"You ain't in order."

"In what particular, sor?"

"You ain't talkin' on the subject."

"Question," growled the members of the opposition.

"I object, sor," said Mr. Twohig.

"Question," cried the chorus.

The chairman put the question.

"Mr. Prisidint, Mr. Prisidint," shouted the outraged

young orator, frantically waving his treasured eyeglasses in the air; "I rise to a question of privilege. I appeal from the decision of this chair."

Hostile murmurs from the opposition.

"I insist, sor!"

He was relentlessly voted down. Here was conspiracy; the most measured and thoughtful must rebel.

"I move ye, sor," he exclaimed in one great crisis, "that we elict a chairman with some knowledge of parliamentary law."

"Order!" shrieked the chairman, glaring at him over his spectacles. "Order." His very chin whiskers seemed to bristle toward the foe. This duel was becoming terrible beyond belief.

The reelection of Childs had been accomplished, the health ordinance passed, and considerable work had been done upon the budget, and now History paused, finger on lip, on the verge of that great issue, the reelection of General Barrett O'Hara as bridge-tender.

There are those, my fellow citizens, who have traced this significant incident in American politics to its very inception. General Barrett O'Hara, it appears, in connection with his official duties as bridge-tender of the city, had been delegated as one of the special policemen, and aside from the mere routine performance of his duty, had been a most efficient and important factor in the preservation of the order of the place. On the 18th of January, 188- this indomitable small man had arrested and led a subject to the lockup, a large and drowsy Frenchman, overwhelmed with drink. Immediately afterwards, two friends of the lately ar-

rested, with the craft of their detested race, approached the efficient officer, and most courteously and suavely, under false and specious pretences of regard, rendered him exceedingly drunk, and abandoned him on the main street, in a thousand times more alarming a state than the person he had himself so recently taken charge of. When discovered by the multitude he was standing on the main corner of the town, roaring defiance to the universe in the name of the Republic of Ireland; and had not this astonishing little man been appropriated soon after by two able-bodied policemen, undoubtedly he would have taken the city single-handed and alone and established then and there the headquarters of the resurrected Fenian movement against the Hated Tyrant. As it was, he was deposited beside the dull carcass he had arrested, for the night and in the morning he, an official of the city, was released on probation with his former charge to the great appreciation of the two conspirators who were taking a day off from the mill to occupy the front bench in the audience room of the police court.

The entire significance of this event had not dawned even upon General Barrett O'Hara at first. But on the appointment of the special police, his name had been omitted; and only lately the aldermen, in the absence of his former friend John Mayhew, had defeated him for return to the position of bridge-tender, with its honours and emoluments. Now the whole disgraceful conspiracy, with all its ramifications, became clear, from the mayor—always his enemy, and now accomplishing his downfall—to the two French

hirelings; and back of all, the dim figure of the Tyrant, Thorndike, wreaking a terrible and crafty revenge on his fearless foe, through his pliant instruments.

He saw it all now, and called heaven to witness. He had not been drunk. He had been drugged, he had been cast into prison, he had been disgraced.

"Conspiracee," cried General Barrett O'Hara, at the top of his voice.

And now Brian Haitch Twohig, in the Common Council, that forum of the people, had arisen to make a final stand.

"Mr. Prisidint," he said, with a solemn pause, "I rise, sor, to spake, as the illustrious pladers of old, for thim that can't spake for thimselves.

"Ahem," slowly expanding his chest, "Now, sor, in looking over history, what do we see."—

Brian Haitch Twohig's strong-winded muse had gone careering through past time. One minute, two minutes, five minutes. "Question," growled one of the opposition.

"Mr. Chairman," cried another bobbing up, "make him stick to what he's talkin' about."

"Order!" says Foreman Allen. "You'll have to get a little closer to your subject," he continues in a sour voice to the young orator.

"I'll talk as I please," states the aroused son of Irish Kings.

"You'll talk on what you ought to, or you'll set down."

"That's right," says a voice.

"I defy you," exclaims Brian Haitch Twohig in a loud voice.

"Set down," said the chairman firmly.

"I defy you," repeats our hero.

"Question," cries the opposition.

The question was put; General Barrett O'Hara was defeated, once and for all, by his hated opponent. Brian Haitch Twohig had not yielded his position; silent, menacing, ominous, he stared at the chairman from the floor.

"I move we adjourn," said someone else.

The meeting had adjourned. O, outrage! And there stood Brian Haitch Twohig, still rooted to the floor, with indignant spots of colour on his high cheek bones. When the bulk of the council had filed out, he unrooted himself and followed.

"I'll have justice; I'll expose him; I'll have my rights, if I devote me loife to the pursuit of thim," he exclaimed to his group of friends in the corridor.

"O, for God's sake, Irish, give us a rest," howled a voice from a group of the opposition.

"Damn Irishman," muttered a black and dignified figure, none other than the betrayed Dr. Archambault, stalking majestically from the aldermanic chamber on the other side of the corridor.

The fierce little old figure, that had heard the debate from behind the Common Council rail, stamped intrepidly out with another group.

"Be God, 'twas the hand of the tyrant that struck us down. 'Twas force and oppression," he affirmed.

"'Tis not the position I care for, the snap of me fingers," he exclaimed; "'tis the principle of it."

The complaining voices passed out of the corridors into the night.

John Mayhew, who had loitered about the door of the Common Council for the amusement of the thing, stopped now a moment on the steps, as the crowd walked on, and then followed slowly to the edge of the walk.

Somebody hailed him from a passing dog-cart. "Hello, Alderman, how de do." The cart came up to the curb. Chippy Merriman's arm was outstretched for his inevitable handshake.

"Well, how's it seem as far's you've got?"

"O, all right."

"What'd they do about old O'Hara, beat him?"

"Yes, both boards have turned him down."

"Say, that was funnier'n a goat, wasn't it—those Frenchmen takin' the old cock out and gettin' him drunk "

"Yes."

"Say, did you hear about Lynde and his accident with the Gargoyle the other day?"

"No."

"He was takin' her out driving the other afternoon, and the horse got started comin' down Stony Hill and the rein broke. There they were, tearing down there on the dead larrup without anything to say about it. I tell you there's where your nerve comes in. Old Tal just gets up and makes a jump for it—onto the horse's back, you know."

"Did he make it?"

"No, he didn't quite make connections, and he went on to the ground. I guess he isn't used to riding much. But what I like about it was his nerve trying it."

"What became of the Gargoyle?"

"O, she wasn't damaged; the horse just raced down the hill and up the next one and she stopped him somehow without turning a hair. The next hill was a back-breaker—where it comes out of the ravine there, you know. The Gargoyle's all right; you can't kill her with an axe."

"How about Lynde?"

"O, it bruised him up some, but not much. He was out the next day. They were both playing in luck."

"You heard about him and Ruth Thorndike, I suppose?"

"No, what's that?"

"O, nothing, except I guess they're engaged all right. He don't say much about it, but he might as well. In fact, between you and me I know it's so. I get it perfectly straight. Only they're waiting before giving it out. She's in New York now, you know, and when she gets back probably they'll announce it then. Well, ta-ta, I'll have to be toddling along."

Mayhew gazed dully after the dog-cart as it drove away muttering to himself the bit of careless gossip he had heard. A sudden wave of feeling took possession of him—of regret and protest and anger; regret for the days that had been—the child in the foolish bobbing frocks, the girl he fought for in the gram-

mar school; the girl in the grandstand at the college ball game; of anger and protest to the conditions of to-day.

Ruth Thorndike engaged to Lynde—to that insufferable cad Talcott Lynde? He would not believe it. And yet, why not? he asked himself bitterly; he could at least support her. That was it after all. Entirely aside from his disgust at Lynde; whether Ruth Thorndike was engaged to him or not, she was inaccessible to himself in any case. He had never seen it before so plainly; so practically—the power of economic forces working in society; the widening of the gap between two people in all their habits and associations and demands on life. He had canvassed it before many times, and yet he had never thought how unsettling the full realisation of the thing would be. A sudden crisis had waked and risen at a chatterer's idle word and almost borne him down.

There was but one thing for him to do, of course; he must regain control of himself at once. Late into the night, a young man with compressed lips and resentful eyes went pacing out the silent streets, into the aspirate silence of the country woods, learning a new, hard lesson from life.

Chapter XII

THE DEN OF THE OGRE

ALONG the squalid railroad front, as you come into any average American city you see, established somewhere beside the net work of side tracks, its brewery. They do not number this among the institutions of the place, with its library, its parks, and its new city hall; many of the leaders of our best provincialism do not even know of it; but here, to break for once into the language of the Ethically Thoughtful, is a Real Influence—more real, perhaps, than any other, the six sordid working days of the week.

There are still those, I am told, earnest persons in elderly bonnets, who meet each week in the vestry and push forward the grand old warfare against "Rum." You would gather from these excellent people that every unfortunate who steps to the outer fringe of a bar, gazes at the bartender with a bloodshot eye and hoarsely bellows: "Rum;" and then and there the horrid bargain is consummated. On the contrary I am told from most reliable sources that the great American Danger to-day is not so much Rum as Beer—cheap, handy, satisfying, and that the hoarse, thrill-

ing cry for rum is now almost extinct. For a moment then, kind, talkative friends, let us lead the Demon Rum back to his lair; let us even drop the consideration of the saloon-keeper—the poor, fat, harassed, mortgaged saloon-keeper and get back to first principles, to the Thing that owns him.

I never see the big brewery at Grimdale, without a half awe of it. There it stands, mother of sin and foolishness and foul politics, its great shoulders above the huddle of little tenements around it, in the steamy, smoky, city air, with its high, blank, barren walls, and its ugly, heathen-hooded cupola, the never-failing little flag of steam from its roof, and the huge sarcasm of its great wire screen sign staring across the railroad tracks to announce, "The Purity Brewery." From here, day by day, the fat drivers, with their loads of black and sodden kegs go out everywhere; to the dingy hotels and the dark saloons and the little slattern restaurants. And wherever they may go, they stop at another part of the same great machine. Each proprietor is bound back to the great corporation at the centre, some only by political bonds, but most by the bonds of sharp necessity, for money loaned to buy the license, to fit out the place, to run in times of extravagance and loss—poor, silly, mortgaged saloon-keepers, in time of plenty pouring out in gaudy extravagance, in time of adversity creeping back again to the same old source—bound round and round, owned body and soul, now and hereafter, by the brewery.

All through the section the network extends—a web, you may call it, thrown down across the whole valley,

all lines converging at the brewery. And there at the corner of the thing, for all the world like a great puffy spider, sits Hermann Pfaff in his private office. Upon the walls of the oilcloth-floored little room, is a diploma obtained somewhere or other by the excellence of Purity Beer! A portrait of a substantial German lady, with a glass of the amber beverage in her hand, and an abnormally pink leg protruding carelessly into the cold outer world through the side seam of an extremely blue tunic, serves to appeal to the poetic and imaginative mind in behalf of same product. On a little tray by the desk side sit some glasses and an emptied, froth-filled bottle.

And there before the desk sits Hermann Pfaff, like a great jelly, in an office chair—his legs apart, the great red collops of flesh on his low collar, above the pure white light of a diamond; the red-veined eyes, the purple-mottled cheeks, the great nose, the wet thick lips, in the midst of a German whisker. The others do the work in the outer office; he sits there alone and waits and ruminates and receives his visitors. He leers like an ogre, when they come in—a wide, moist, glistening smile, which shows his great yellow teeth.

“Come in, gentlemen; come in—” with your orders, and your political deals, and your mortgages and your notes and your last angry despairing appeals for renewal. Always the same old ogre greets you, leering and mumbling in guttural obsequiousness, from the time he takes the raw, uncouth Irish bartender in his moist and pudgy hand and turns him out—an Amer-

ican miracle, a full-blown saloon-keeper; to that last day, that awful day, when the mortgages are due and overdue past all hoping, and he turns to and gobbles him up.

It would make you laugh to see how easily the brewery runs a town like Ellington. On the one side is King Skeane, cigar agent, with his voters; on the other side, the Purity Brewery with its beer. If you sell your beer to my voters, why I sell my cigars to your saloons. It's as old and simple as the laws of demand and supply. The reason why Ellington drinks Purity Beer, is exactly the same as why it smokes such poor cigars.

There are three members on our license board, chosen one each year for periods of three years; each mayor has a choice. Each and every Fall the free-men of Ellington come together to choose this precious instrument; to exercise the great American privilege of voting for a license commissioner once removed. Other elections—state and national—give a certain play to imagination and theory and personal choice; possess certain possibilities of amusement. The fair-weather politicians with their reforms can come into these. But this is no game for the thin-legged gentlemen, with soprano voices and rimless eyeglasses, chirping their little watchwords of reform. This is no ethical pastime; this is business—a part of the fierce, grey, old struggle for existence. Here are the perennial politicians, the saloon-keepers, at work, day in and day out; and here is the brewery pouring out its money, and here is King Skeane, plotting and planning

and shifting and turning—knowing the dark soul of the average voter like the light of day—every nook and cranny—Yankee, French, and Irish,—with its sentiments and its superstitions; its hatreds and its affections and its prejudices; playing on it like a cunning musician at his instrument, till it thrills and wails and shrieks as his facile fingers will. The Saloon-keeper, the Brewery, the King Skeane—there's where you get conservatism in politics, triply moored to the bedrock of democracy and the present state of things.

In the fall of 188-, as everybody knows, the democratic mayor was defeated. It was a combination of circumstances—too much assurance among the democrats, a touching appeal to the conscience of the voters by the republicans, coupled with a clever manipulation of the French-Canadian vote. "King" Skeane had feared its coming for years, but had not expected it so soon.

There was the day of remorse. One license commissioner gone to start with. Then gradually the growing rumour of an investigation of the old board—for laxness and worse than laxness in their dealings with the saloons. It is the most elementary trick in politics to clear out a license board on technicalities. No one knew that better than Skeane. But a new license board, then a new lot of licenses, yes, and even a new brewery, it was said. It was a time of trembling. Never had such an awful sense of the sanctity of the liquor law brooded over the town since its foundation. You could not break into a saloon after hours,

with an axe. But someway, somehow—perhaps the story of the rival brewery trying to get in was at first untrue—the affair drifted by the danger line, and the old board, with its one new member, had granted the list of licenses again.

The campaign for another year now began in earnest. Day after day, night after night, King Skeane worked unceasingly to make the administration ridiculous. From his position in the aldermen, he forced the old mayor to continued foolishness and improprieties, through simple stimulation of his Yankee obstinacy; the flustered speeches of the tormented, French alderman became bywords of the town; he nearly strangled the fat butcher from Ward One with sheer helpless anger. He kept the entire republican forces in a continuous sickly grin of apology. All this was merely negative. But continually, King Skeane was revolving positive plans in his dark mind, especially concerning the great subject of the next candidate for mayor. And now he sat in the holy of holies, the private office of the Purity Brewery, pushed back against the wall, below the bare-legged goddess of beer—a grey cigar stub beneath one corner of his grizzled moustache. Opposite him, suspended on his office chair, sat Hermann Pfaff, the great bright diamond ring upon one of his fat hands folded across his abdomen, flashing and glistening as it went heaving up and down with the labour of his breathing. These two were discussing politics; not with any maudlin sentimentality, or buncombe or false and blatant appeals to the emotions. They were talking busi-

ness in a business way,—motionless, gestureless, without unnecessary elocution.

"We neet a goot man; we neet him bat," gasped Hermann Pfaff.

"That's your man," said the laconic Skeane.

"You thing so?"

"Yes."

"Aind he preddy young?"

"That won't hurt him. They've got the old-timers now. We'll give 'em enough of 'em before we get through with 'em."

The ogre chuckled. "You're a goot one," he said.

King Skeane moved for the first time in his chair.

"Young men are all right to-day; they're using 'em. Look at Farrell here in Grimdale; he wasn't any older than this boy when he first run. They catch the young vote."

"Thad's true."

"He's smart, this boy."

"Goot," grunted the ogre, nodding his head.

"They can't say anything against him."

"Goot."

"They all know him; that's another thing. There's lots of those Yankees will vote for him on his name."

"Goot."

"And there's lots more will vote for him on this new tariff business; he's one of the young fellers that come over to the democrats on that. That's quite a card nowadays.

The ogre considered seriously.

"Vell, vell, ve arranghe it vit him."

"What?"

"Figs it up, you know."

"No, you can't do it, not that way. He ain't that kind."

"Why not. He's in politigs aind he?" asked the naive ogre.

"Because he ain't."

"O vell, bring him down, we'll gif him a goot time anyway."

"Not yet."

"Why not? They don't any of 'em obchect to a goot time. They ain't no harm in that."

"No, you got to handle this one different. You let me take care of him."

"Vhat'll you do."

"O, I'll give him some business first. He needs it bad enough. Thorndike's been after him—freezin' him out for what he did about that health bill."

"So I heert."

"I guess he ain't got any too much left."

"Well, gif him our business right away," said Pfaff energetically. "And the saloons, they can gif him theirs also."

"You wait. Not all at once," said the crafty Skeane. "We'll give it to him, but we'll give him some other work first. I'll see some of my people in Ellington. You just leave him to me."

"O, all right," said the brewer."

A pause followed, in which "King" Skeane started up to leave.

"Vait a minute," said Pfaff, searching with great

distress of body for his electric bell, "Led's haf something to dring before you go."

They sat there when the tray had come in, and they were left alone again, each with his damp amber glass in his hand.

"Vell," said the ogre playfully, with a deep thick laugh. "Here goes to the negst mayor of Ellington."

In the meantime if John Mayhew was going to be mayor of Ellington, he certainly didn't know it. Brian Haitch Twohig, indeed, had intimated that the honour might fall at any time to one of these two.

"I bet you one of us could get the nomination this Fall, if we tried," said Mr. Twohig convincingly.

"O, come off," said John Mayhew.

"Well, who've they got?" asked Mr. Twohig.

Considerable attention was certainly beginning to centre in Mayhew, politically. He had cut loose now entirely from the reigning influence of the town, and stood free, independent, and resentful—to a certain degree a recognised centre for the opposition to the administration, and the Thorndike interests behind it. This dark young man with the easily excited glint in his eyes, was a fighter; he talked with an embarrassing directness in debate no matter what degree of local sacredness attached to the subject; his sharp and business-like questions broke into the maundering commonplace of formerly routine measures in a most unpleasant and distracting way. The clumsy administration forces fairly palpitated with bovine alarm, when he opened his attacks.

One person took recognition of this new force in

local affairs immediately. King Skeane saw possible future developments; and came artfully forward to Mayhew's support—standing in the background, counselling and guiding the new man; manipulating and confusing the opposition. The two men were thrown much together, and had ample opportunity to measure one another. Skeane found the younger man a good instrument—with certain very clearly defined limits; he was too direct to obtain the best results politically; and, when he chose, thoroughly obstinate; beyond a certain point, into certain well-established commonplaces of political practice, he refused to move. From Skeane Mayhew himself learned much; the measure of patience and astuteness which every politician who accomplishes must know; the justifiable concessions which are necessitated by every cause. But beyond that the difference of race-inheritance and training opposed itself. The Calvinist jarred with the Jesuit; the New Englander refused to accept the subserviency of the means to the end, which seemed justifiable to the Irishman; and Mayhew saw with distaste the devious ways of King Skeane's mind wandering far away into the outer darkness of practical politics, and held aloof.

Meanwhile Mayhew's independence in politics certainly had not helped his business interests. Two lean months had intervened. A man less angry and determined might have been utterly discouraged. As it was there were sharp changes evident in his face. The straight lines of middle age, drawn through long times of rebellious reflection in the silent office, were replac-

ing the youthfulness of his mouth; his high cheek bones showed more clearly; he was thinning under the first nervous strain that civilisation puts upon the individual—as men of value and good stock are apt to do.

His first business practice—from the banks and stores and stocking factory—was gone, all of it. For all these weeks there had been practically nothing. But now of a sudden an entirely new class of work appeared—probate business for poor widows, a few small tort cases; calls from Irishmen in business, from contractors, and now and then, very occasionally, from a saloonkeeper. Mayhew could not explain this sudden growth to himself—except that he seemed to see dimly it was in some way due to his political connection. The business was democratic, largely Irish; and the saloon-keepers talked frankly and easily on the bond of democracy between them. The young man was gratified by what he imagined he saw; there was, then, such a thing as a genuine fellow-being awakened by politics; a spontaneous appreciation of services; otherwise whence these practical demonstrations of it?

Then one day he was sent one small piece of work by the brewery. The step was arranged with Skeane's most consummate cunning; Mayhew had not the slightest thought of the moving force or the object. They could not want anything from him, he assured himself; he had nothing whatever to give. This kind of business was not anything he desired; but he certainly could not refuse it without evidencing a ridiculous squeamishness. It was simply, he told himself, a part of the new class of practice which was coming to

him. The growth of the average law practice is at best a strange and wonderful series of tricks of Destiny; and his it seemed was to be no exception.

Yet across the hall he watched one gigantic figure defying all the carefully laid purposes of the legal fates—the form of the young Irish-American statesman, Brian Haitch Twohig. Day by day this one added a cubit to his stature by his own unaided thinking; day after day he seriously followed his thoughtful cigar to the police-court; to the Father Matthew Society; in among the affairs of men. His ponderous movements, his Websterian front, and his solemn, sonorous quotations, won him the respect of that audience on the rear benches of the police court room, which is most interested in its happenings.

“Mike Twohig’s bye,” said the men in jean overalls, wagging their heads. “Be God, he’s smart. If oi waanted any law worrk done, oi’d have him.”

In the Father Matthew Society he was assiduous in oratory and debate. It was at this period of his life, in standing for the negative on the question: “Resolved: That drink has caused more misery to mankind than the tyranny of England,” that he delivered that grand Philippic which begins, “Erin, whose proud eastern shores still spurn back the hated waters of the Tyrant, calls upon us, her children.”

Any Father Matthew member would tell you this: “Rosy Twohig; he’s a queer little devil; stuck on himself to beat the cars, but he’s the boy can talk for yeh.” He had already won a sort of oratorical championship for the society.

But still above and beyond the younger men, O'Harrigan and Griffin, plied their lucrative wiles—the beautiful O'Harrigan, rosy, perfumed, fresh-shaven, casting his floral bonds about the souls and affections of the jury; and in the background, the little black Griffin, coaching their witnesses, arranging for jurors clear back to the source of their choice in the aldermen, marshalling their spies—the undertakers, the cheap doctors, special agents in the mills, continually on the lookout for accident and death. Month after month these men made their ghoulish living from the arms and legs and fingers lopped off by the wheels of industry; a living greater than any other lawyers of the vicinity could boast—not bounded by the small lines of the town of Ellington. In fact they threatened already to take their offices to Grimdale to be near the courts.

John Mayhew was in his office working on some detail in the early evening, when he was surprised by the unusual sight of a client. A slender man, with slouchy shoulders and a turned-up coat collar appeared all at once in the doorway.

"'S your name Mayhew?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, all right then," he said. "You're a lawyer, ain't you?"

He advanced with a slow, loafing, devil-may-care gait, and sat down opposite Mayhew at the desk.

"Yes."

He was a red-haired, thin-faced fellow, with dirty teeth, and an eye that cocked in toward his nose. He

had been drinking; there was no doubt about that from where Mayhew sat across the desk.

"There ain't anybody else here, is there?" he said, looking around.

"No."

"Well, say, boss, I got somethin' I want to ask you about."

"All right."

"Well, then, I'm a cabinet-maker up here in Grimfield."

"Grimdale?"

"I meant Grimdale. I ain't been there long; and I keep gettin' it mixed up with another place I used to work."

The man lied. His whole manner showed it. He had the nonchalant effrontery of the fellow who strikes you for a quarter on the street, without the slightest trace of the rough embarrassment of the mechanic. His hands lay on the desk before him, palpably innocent of honest labour,—soft and long and dirty, with the big red freckles on their backs, and black finger nails. On the thin wrists, underneath the cuffless sleeves, showed the light blue edge of a tattoo.

"There's a fellow I run across down here in Ellington's got a scheme he wants me to go into, and he wants me to give him an answer right off. So I told him I wanted to talk with somebody and I'd let him know to-morrow.

"Now say," said the man, leaning over the desk. "Supposin' you was at work and I come along and I

says. 'I got a game that's worth ten of that, if you want to come into it. I got somethin' here that's worth money to a certain man in this town!'"

The man tapped with his middle finger on what seemed to be a bunch of paper in the breast of his dingy coat, and continued his imaginary conversation.

" 'This fellow I mean 's got his million put away all right, and there's a thousand or two of it comin' our way, yes and more, if we work it right. This stuff I got here's worth it to him. He got a little frisky, like the rest of 'em, when he was young, and now he's just about willin' to give us what we ask to keep it quiet.'

" Well, what would you do if a man come at you with a game like that? "

The fellow looked up sharply at Mayhew, as he asked the question.

" I wouldn't touch it. "

" Why not? "

" It's blackmail. "

" What is it if you get caught? "

" State's prison. "

" That's all right; but supposin' it was perfectly safe—sure—and you knew it. Supposin' we got him so he don't dare say a word. What then? And then supposin' we got some young lawyer that wouldn't mind makin' a dollar to go in with us and kind of steer us," said the man leaning his face over the desk.

" Say, boss," he continued in a lower voice, fixing his cunning eyes on Mayhew's. " Say, I can get you into this thing, if you'll say the word. There's money

in it for all of us—ten times as much as setting around here waitin' and hopin' for something to show up. What do you say?"

"I say that I've heard all I want of that kind of stuff," said Mayhew, getting up.

"But supposin' there's a good reason why you should; supposin' you've got a damn good right—"

"Suppose nothing," said Mayhew. "You drop it where you are and get out."

The man shambled defiantly toward the entrance.

"Go home," said Mayhew, "and get sobered off," opening the door for him.

"Then you won't touch it—even if I showed you—"

"No," snapped Mayhew, "Get out."

"You'll be damn sorry for this," said the late client, passing out into the dark corridor.

The door slammed after him.

Chapter XIII

THE TOWN GUARD

LIKE to think there is still in the world a man like—John Heenan—the marshal—of such cold, absolute, deadly courage; it takes you back, in a way, to the early, hand-to-hand days of the world, when men fought with their eyes in each other's faces—to Thermopylae and the white-shouldered Greeks. For forty years, freckled-faced boy and grim-featured man, he has seen and known every danger of street and alley; has met and cowed every kind of brute, which the inseting tides of the world have swept into the town. He has never fought like the fellow in the old song, with his legs hacked off, upon his stumps; but he has held a lonely tenement house for an hour with a broken leg, against two families, and after half of them were disabled and the remainder brought to terms, hobbled off on an old broom as a crutch, to get assistance to take his unconscious prisoner to the lock-up. He has gone into all sorts of back tenements—alone, unflinching, without the quiver of an eyelid, and dragged out all conditions of strange things from all kinds of strange holes. He is like a tamer, you may say, in his den of beasts; he knows each one of them

by name; and everyone of them knows him and fears him.

Day after day you see him, a commonplace sight in the commonplace old lock-up under the city hall—with his bare high forehead, heightened now by baldness, his thin, heavily-muscled jaw, his face broad across the cheek bones, his stubby moustache, his thin-lipped mouth with the little upward twist in the left corner, the long scar on his left cheek, where the big Frenchman slashed him, and his grey-blue eyes—indifferent usually or roving, but on excitement or anger filled at once with a cold light; two grey globes of steel fastened upon the offender. He sat that late spring night with Mayhew, under the gaslight behind the rail of the little office, smoking the pipe of idleness. Down the corridor to the right, a simple “drunk,” “a song-bird,” to be technical, was raising the underground echoes in the low rooms with a musical selection. It seemed the song of the simple drunk was one entitled “My Father’s Sword,” which he considered the best song ever written, and he called upon all men to witness.

“Say, d’you hear that, John Heenan,” he called. “That’s the bes’ song ever written.” John Heenan stepped into the corridor.

“O, shut up there, Jim Flynn,” he called.

A pause.

“If you don’t, I’ll come in and see you.”

The singer babbled complainingly down to silence; and then to sleep.

The chief resumed his talk with Mayhew on the Polish murderer, who had escaped from Grimdale and

was in hiding, heaven knew where. It was an ax-murder, of the peculiarly vigorous and thorough kind characteristic of the race. The chief gave the simple explanation.

"He wanted the woman and the other fellow got her, and when he found he was left he just chopped the other one open; that's all."

He went on with a few expositions on courtship and affection in the Polish quarter, as chaste and holy as love in a menagerie. They discussed the chance of the murderer lurking now in the tenements.

"We're lookin' for him," said the chief. "But how'll we get him unless we see him? They'll never say anything, if he stays there and keeps still all his lifetime. These Poles are better than the Italians, though. They're more talkative."

A man with a racking cough shuffled up to the rail,—a tramp.

"Hello, Cap'n; say, can I get a night's lodgin' in here?"

"What's the matter with you? What're you in here this time of year for?"

"I got this cough on me, and I don't like to sleep out while it's goin'. I'm in bad shape," wheezed the man.

"God, you look it," said the chief, with brutal sympathy.

The fellow was duly prepared and ushered into the tramp room, that little cave, in the fall and early winter nights jammed full like the black hole of Calcutta, with its motley crowd of lodgers in contorted attitudes

of sleep; now empty but for the man with a resounding cough.

"He's got a bad one," said Heenan. "We had one of 'em die on us last year."

"Did you hear old Bat Foley was dead?" he continued after a pause.

"No."

"They found him in an alley last night. He started home, but he never got there."

"He was an old-timer, wasn't he?"

"Yes, and there's another one gone down there in the Patch—old Mrs. Carney."

"John Carney's grandmother?"

"Yes—the old one. 'The Kerry miser,' they called her—they're havin' her wake to-night."

"How old was she?"

"O, I don't know; she always looked the same since I can remember. I guess she was an old-timer 'the night of the big wind,'" said Heenan laughing.

"How much money do you suppose she had?"

"They say about nine thousand dollars."

"All made in the mill?"

"Yes, and livin' on tea and potatoes, and a dollar a month ground-rent for her house in the Patch."

"Does John Carney get any of it?"

"No, the house goes to his mother and some of the bank books, and the rest of them go to some cousins. The old woman got down on John the last few years."

"What's Carney back here again for?" asked the chief, after a little silence.

"I didn't know he *was* back."

"O, he's been back a week or ten days, and another feller with him, from the South."

"What's his name?" asked Mayhew.

"Mike Garvin—a red-headed feller, with a cock-eye; he's got relations here."

"O," said Mayhew, remembering.

"Carney's in pretty hot company this time," commented Heenan. "This red-head's a bad one; he's had his number. They acted a little queer around here and I had him looked up."

"What was he?"

"He's been a ship carpenter some and a deck hand on board the coastin' steamers, when he had to work; but most of the time he's one of the gang you see around the wharves picking up a dollar and goin' and blowin' it for booze. One time he knocked down a feller in New York and went through him, and they caught him at it and gave him a year. O, he's a bad one all right."

"What I'd like to know is what they're up to. They haven't got any money now, but they had some when they come here and they were around in the saloons with it throwin' it out and talkin' pretty loud. 'Never mind, they knew where they could get some more when that was gone!' That's the kind of stuff they were giving out."

Mayhew made no comment. He had a feeling the other man was pumping him.

"And now," continued the chief, "they're hard up

again. And I've been lookin' for them to do something. But they haven't. I wonder what their game is anyhow. It looks to me, someways, as if they'd got hold of something that was so big, they didn't exactly dare to tackle it."

"They have," said Mayhew.

"What is it?" said Heenan looking up sharply.

"Blackmail."

"Who told you so?"

"The red-headed one," Mayhew rehearsed his interview. The marshal listened with concentrated attention.

"Well, then, so long as you know that, who do you think it is?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Make a guess then."

"Well, I naturally thought at first it might be Thorndike."

"Why don't you think so now?"

"What's he done?"

"Well," said the man, the wrinkles gathering around his shrewd eyes, "we ain't any of us perfect."

"I know that, but what could he have done?"

"Well, if you don't know, I don't," said the chief suggestively.

"Well, I don't."

Neither spoke for a moment.

"Of course, Carney's got it in for Thorndike," said Mayhew, "for firing him. You know that."

"Yes, I know it."

"And he claims Thorndike's been chasin' him ever since. He says he's had you after him especially. How is that?" continued Mayhew, looking up.

John Heenan laughed. "You don't want to ask me questions like that," he said.

"I've got a good deal of sympathy for Carney," volunteered Mayhew.

"I ain't," said the marshal, with the professional pessimism of a policeman. "He used to be all right, but he's turned out a drunken bum. He's got a girl down here—as good a girl's there is in this town, just killin' herself for him, and he battin' around the country, doin' nothing."

"Could he get a job if he wanted one?" asked Mayhew.

"I dunno."

"Around here I mean."

"O, I don't know. I guess he could if he tried very hard. He'd rather lie around the saloons and drink. He's a bad one when he's got the drink in," said the chief, "he don't know what he's doin'."

"Did you ever run against him?"

"I had one tussle with him. Generally that's enough," said Heenan significantly. "They're all right when you know how to handle em. Don't force 'em; take your time, that's all. Let 'em come at you, if they want to. Then you've got 'em; they're always wild. You can do what you want to with 'em."

Footsteps were heard on the stone steps outside.

"But this is all on the side about Carney and the

red-head," said Heenan, straightening up. "As long as they don't do anything and nobody says a word, we can't mix into it. You've got just as good a right to guess as anybody. Only don't say anything—not from me anyway."

The fat policeman stood before the black walnut bar of the office; his great loose jowl purple with haste.

"There's been some kind of row down at the Patch," he growled.

"Where?"

"Down at old Mrs. Carney's wake."

"What's the matter?"

"I guess they've had some money stolen."

"What makes you think so?"

"Well, that's the way I hear it."

"You been down there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, can't you find out anything?"

"No, there's nobody knows really but the family and they won't talk. But I got hold of a feller that told it to me as it was, I guess."

"How was it?"

"Well, they was holdin' one of these old-time wakes down there—out of doors, in front of the house. And while that was goin' on, Mrs. Carney, the daughter-in-law of th' old woman went in, and found somebody inside and there was a scuffle. But whoever it was got away."

"Well, who do you think it was?"

"Well, I guess probly it was Shawn Carney and the red-head, all right. They've been drinkin' and ain't

been near the house, and I hear there's been a row anyway, and they wouldn't let 'em come there."

"Well, what would they be after?"

"Some of 'the stuff' the old woman had in there."

"She had most of it in the savings banks, didn't she?"

"Yes, but they say she always had some of it around the house in different places,—up in the loft, and down under floorin', done up in a stockin', like they used to have it. They say some of it she always kept in there to bury her with."

"So you think they were after that, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see Carney's mother?"

"Yes, and she said there was nothin' the matter, and for me to go on and mind my own business. She had a bad welt over her eye she got fallin' on the floor."

"That's all you got, was it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You didn't see anything of Carney or the red-head?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you go back and send in Quinn to stay here. I guess I'll go down there myself."

"Yes, sir," said the big policeman trudging off like a fat school-boy who has recited his lesson.

John Heenan had risen and begun putting on his street uniform.

"I won't get anything out of him," he said, "but I'm going down just the same."

He lifted up his coat tails and slid his hand-cuffs into his hip pocket.

"I wonder if that was what they was up here for, after all," he said, thoughtfully.

Chapter XIV

AN UNDERSTANDING

IT was sheer, blundering good luck that urged John Mayhew that day—that long, lazy, early summer Sunday afternoon—to go down and call on Maggie. As he came along he saw Barry leaning out under the toy maple tree at the side gate, smoking his clay pipe with philosophic calm.

“Hello, Barry,” said Mayhew.

Barry bobbed his head silently.

“Is Maggie at home?”

“You’ll find her inside,” said Barry, at last removing the pipe from his teeth.

“’Tis a foine day,” he commented, desiring to do the utmost courtesies of the season, now that he had once given up his meditations and his smoking.

“You bet,” said John Mayhew.

He had scarcely knocked when Maggie appeared at the doorway in her decent, black Sunday dress, neat to an almost painful severity.

“John Mayhew!” she cried, laughing outright with pleasure. “Why, how air ye, John? My goodness, but I’m glad to see ye.”

The door closed after them. The figure at the fence

readjusted its arms upon the pickets and returned to its meditations.

"Sure, ye ain't lookin' natch'ral, John," said Maggie, studying him.

"How's that?"

"O, ye're lookin' older; ye're thinner, ain't ye? Is it bein' an alderman? Are they workin' ye too hard?"

"O, I guess not, Maggie," laughed John; "I guess I'm none too old yet."

"I'll bet ye can't guess who's in there," continued Maggie, waving her hand toward the little parlour.

"Go on in; go in and see for yerself."

It was Ruth Thorndike; he hadn't seen her since the disagreement. John Mayhew looked with desperation for some feasible avenue of escape. There was none. Maggie was herding him into the room from behind with amiable determination.

"O, how do you do, Miss Ruth?" he said, with decent surprise.

"Listen to that, 'Miss Ruth,'" said the incorrigible Maggie, mocking his stiffness. "What's the matter with you two now; have ye been fightin' again?"

"Well, then, how do you do, John," said Ruth. The corners of her mouth went up again. She was laughing with her old, happy carelessness.

"I'm awfully glad to see you again," she said. "Where have you been all these years?"

"Where have *you* been, you mean," he said. "When did you get back from New York?"

"Only last week. I stayed a month longer than I should have. Wasn't it disgraceful? But I *was* hav-

ing such fun. I'd be there now if it hadn't been for Papa. He hasn't been feeling very well."

"What's the matter with your father?"

A shadow had come over her face.

"O, I don't know—overwork, the doctor says. We're a little worried about him. It's nothing much, I hope."

"Sure, ye'll be wanting to talk to each other!" Maggie broke in, "and I'll just slip out into the kitchen."

Apparently her diagnosis of their desires was not correct. Miss Thorndike sat silently, following with her gay little parasol the outline of a patch of summer sunlight on the floor, John Mayhew staring at her with entirely unnecessary vehemence. There they were again—those two—in Maggie's best room—that mysterious little place, with its shades thriftily half-lowered to keep out the sun; its carpet with the familiar big cabbage rose bouquets; its black-walnut table with the marble top; its cabinet organ, perpetually closed; its whatnot, and its row of popes and saints and martyrs, gloomy witnesses, staring from the dim walls—the same old popes, with their look of sarcastic hunger, the supernaturally gentle Virgin, the wonderful flaming lithograph of the Sacred Heart; and underneath the mildest of the saints, sat this most unsaintlike and modern young person—just returned from the pillage of the metropolitan stores—in all the glory of the latest style. You remember those foolish fashions of that period—drawn here, and puffed there, and padded all out of the semblance of a human form,

its fabric—with idiotic names—elephant's breath, I think they call the colour she was wearing; and yet, there she was, all that was longed for and admired and envied in dress—and charming—entirely charming; you would say so even now—in spite of the absurdities of her costume.

"I suppose," John Mayhew blurted out, "I'll have to give you my best wishes."

"Best wishes, for what?"

"For your engagement."

"My engagement—to whom?"

"To Talcott Lynde—that is, I understood so."

"Who told you that?" said Ruth.

An angry red came into her cheeks. "Who told you that?" she insisted.

"Why I don't know," stammered Mayhew. "I guess it was Chippy Merriman first. I supposed it was generally understood."

"It's a lie," said Miss Thorndike savagely. "Engaged to Talcott Lynde! Oh I'd like to find the person who started that first. I wouldn't be engaged to him if I were a mummy."

"True for you," said Maggie, standing in the doorway. She was beaming with good Irish hospitality, a bit of refreshment for her guests—cake and lemonade on little coloured napkins on an immaculate tray.

"Take both koids," she urged. "Ye'll have some of my loaf cake, John, ye used to loike it, both of ye."

"Many's the toime I've stole it and given it to ye, when yer fathers would have been crazy if they'd

known it, but I don't believe it did ye any harm, aither of ye.

"Ah, will, will, will, thim was great days," she said sighing hugely. "They seem a long whoile ago, don't they?"

Her guests smiled across their cake and lemonade.

"But I'm glad to hear ye say what ye did about that Lynde feller," she continued, returning to the present; "any man that'll be the coward he was with that Dibble girl, don't deserve to be noticed by dacint folks."

"Don't tell that story, Maggie," said Ruth.

"Why not?"

"Because you aren't sure of it."

"Why not, ain't I? Didn't I get it from the gurr! that the hired man at the Dibble's is payin' attention to?"

"What was it, Maggie?" said John, "you might as well tell me now."

"'Twas nothin'; only the horse ran away with them down Stony Hill, and that black-hearted coward jumped out and left her alone in the wagon."

"But he says," said Ruth, "that the bridle parted and he tried to jump out on the horse and stop him."

"He says that, does he," said Maggie, "will, thin, he lies; the man at Dibbles says the harness was as whole as whin it left the shop, only a small strap in the bridle that broke when the horse stumbled, just before he stopped. You don't tell *me*; he's a bad lot; I know 'em when I see 'em."

"Maybe it came unbuckled some way," said Ruth.

"Will, thin, if it did, he unbuckled it, when he got to the team again. Sure, that poor little noodle-hided Dibble choild'd niver know the difference."

"You shouldn't talk that way, Maggie," said Ruth.

"Are ye definidin' him," said Maggie, with much sarcasm. "O, go on, ye're only doin' it because ye think it's polite."

"Ye'll excuse me again," she said, "while I take these things out." She retreated once more to the back of the house with the remains of her little feast, lamenting because her callers had not eaten everything she displayed.

A light summer wind lisped in the leaves of the grapevine on the little front porch, and sent in through the window warm, faint odours of its leaves and blossoms. The whole atmosphere of the world seemed to have changed in the last quarter hour. The spot of sunshine on the floor had grown, it seemed, lighting the whole dark room, and glorifying the dark-haired girl in the grey gown, against the background of saints, with an especial glad beauty of her own.

"Well, how are politics, John?" asked this very flesh-and-blood young picture.

"O, well enough. How are they with you?"

"Fine, I read nothing now but leading editorials."

"Tremendous! The fashion page is entirely deserted, I suppose."

"Entirely."

"The blue-stockings' progress, or from fashion page to editorials, by Miss Ruth Thorndike," he commented sarcastically.

"That's all right," she answered, combatively. "You're a great politician, John Mayhew, but I'll tell you one thing, you'd never have got that health ordinance through if it hadn't been for me."

"You!" cried Mayhew.

"Yes, me," she repeated, with a pretty, decided little gesture.

She told him about her visit to the tenements, then—or that part of it she cared to, leaving out the adventure with the Brute. He watched with delight the change that was wrought in her; the growth of her feeling as she told the thing; the deep serious soul of the woman, set alight by the sad sympathy for what she had seen, irradiating the pretty, careless face of the girl.

"It was dreadful," she said, "awful, the way they lived. I couldn't bear to think of it. I made papa promise me he would help to have it changed."

"By Jove, Ruth," said John, "you're a brick."

The girl flushed.

"So you were the influence that changed the vote?" he went on, laughing. "Great Heavens, what a terrible person you are. I wish I'd had you with us when we took the first vote."

"On Mr. Childs, you mean? Never sir. I'd never voted against him, and I don't think you ought to have either; that poor old man, with his sick wife and nothing but that little salary to depend on. I don't see how you could do it."

"Well, we can't all think alike in politics," remarked Mayhew.

"No. we can't, you vile democrat you," she said, laughing.

"Well, I don't care much," she continued, "I don't take my politics so hard as some people—except when there's a campaign on—and then I'm *bitter*, I warn you now.

"There's only one thing really I do want, I suppose," she went on musingly.

"What's that?"

"No, that's one of my political secrets."

"O, go ahead and tell me."

"Well, then—I want my father to be governor of the state. I don't believe I care so much for myself—really. But he does want it so much. I know that, though he never said one word to me about it."

John Mayhew's face darkened.

"I don't suppose I ought to have talked to you about that," said Ruth quickly. "I know you two have had some quarrel over something in politics."

"It isn't that," said Mayhew. "Personally, I'd like to see him 'governor. I was thinking of something else."

"What do you mean?"

"O, nothing much."

"Go on, John, please. I want you to tell me just what you think."

"Well, I don't know much about it, but can he get it—I mean the nomination? There's just one thing that's going to trouble him—that is, if there's dissatisfaction in the mills."

"But there isn't going to be, is there? I mean nothing serious."

"Yes, I think there is, if that next cut goes into effect. And if there is, it will be hard on your father politically. It won't be the year to run a man with a labour fight on his hands, especially now with all this talk on the tariff, and a man in the position that your father is, as a kind of leader of this cut movement among the other manufacturers."

"But my father says there won't be any trouble; that the sensible men will see it's for their own interests to take what he can give them. I don't understand it exactly, but it's the idea that they'd better take something than nothing at all. It's always been that way. They've always been reasonable, I mean."

"But I think this is different," said Mayhew, "they're all worked up over this, especially the mule-spinners, and they say they'll go out, sure. Maggie'll know about it; you call her."

"Maggie," called Ruth. "Oh Maggie."

The form of Maggie appeared from the next room. "We want you to settle a dispute," said Ruth. "Is there going to be a strike in the mill if they put on the new cut in wages, do you think?"

"Sure, and there is, I believe. Savin' your prudence, Miss Ruth, it's too mooch. Some of them says they can't live on what they'll get."

"And will they strike?"

"They say they will. The mule-spinners had a meeting this afternoon to see about it."

“There’s Barry in the other room; he’ll know; I’ll ask him.

“Did ye see any of the mule-spinners since the meetin’, Barry?”

“I did,” came the voice from the other room.

“And did they vote to strike?”

“They did; the minute they make the cut, they voted to get out—all of ’em. They voted solid for it—ivry wan. They’re fightin’ mad, but they won’t say nothin’ till it comes.”

“You see,” said Mayhew.

“Yer father knows best, no doubt,” said Maggie; “but sure ’twould be a great thing, if ye could get him to give up makin’ a cut just now; there’ll be thousands of people it’ll throw out of work, they say, all over.”

“I’m afraid I couldn’t do much toward getting my father to change his business plans,” said Ruth, becoming, nevertheless, very thoughtful.

“It’s too bad,” said Mayhew, in mock seriousness. “All this would never have happened if we’d had a democratic administration, would it, Maggie?”

“No,” retorted the fierce republican in the grey gown, “we wouldn’t have had any mills at all.”

“Not unless they were natural things and able to support themselves without hiding behind a tariff,” argued Mayhew, the political economist.

“Oh I don’t care about your theories,” said the opposition; “facts are good enough for me.”

“It’s too bad she can’t reform and be a democrat, isn’t it, Maggie?”

"Sure, and it is; I'm sorry for the poor gurrl. But they say after a toime they get hardened to bein' republicans, and they don't moind it."

"That's all right," said Miss Thorndike. "I don't mind the company I associate with, if you don't. I'd rather trust my father to be honest than your Mr. Skeane."

"There's one thing, Maggie," said Mayhew, recoiling from the attack on this desperately defended citadel, "I've meant to ask you for a long time, and that is if you remember anybody named Richard Plimsoll that the folks used to talk about when we were children—way back in the war times."

"Oh, yes," said Ruth, "who was he, Maggie?"

"Was it a man?" asked Maggie, with a queer look in her eyes.

"Why, I suppose so," said Mayhew, with surprise.

"Did ye ever see him?"

"No, that's it; he was our pet mystery."

Ruth nodded.

"No, I guess ye didn't," said Maggie. "There wasn't any man by that name I iver heard of. But there was a boat though."

"A boat?" said the two.

"Yis, a ship. She was lost at sea or sunk or somethin', I niver knew exactly what; they was very private about it. Sure all I iver knew was one toime I overheard Miss Ruth's father sayin' somethin' about it to her mother. The company was interested in it some way, and there was a tirrible commotion over it one toime in the house. But don't ye iver tell yer father,

I said so, Miss Ruth. I ain't got no business tillin' you things I just overheard. Ye won't now, will ye?"

"Of course not," said Ruth.

"A ship," she added, "how queer!"

"Isn't it though?" said Mayhew abstractedly.

The driver had arrived at the door with Ruth Thorndike's dogcart. John Mayhew left the house with her, and walked with her to the curbing.

"Good-bye, you terrible republican," he said.

"Good-bye, you poor mugwump," she replied. "I give you fair warning to look out for me next fall. We're going to annihilate you, and the rest of your old party."

"We're sworn enemies, then?"

"To the death," she said, laughing. "Let's shake hands on it."

She stretched out her hand and said good-bye again, and away went the silent driver and the laughing girl to the house upon the hill.

Her father was gone when she arrived, on a drive to Grimdale with a friend—business or politics, one or the other; what are the claims of the American Sunday against these? He would not be back till supper time. Ruth debated how she should kill time in the silent house, with the idle afternoon sun on the floors by the western windows, or out in the empty and tiresome garden. Sunday afternoons certainly were a bore.

"If you please, ma'am, there was a man here to see your father and left this," said the immaculate

second girl, gingerly handing her a most discouraged looking envelope.

"When was he here?"

"Just after your father went out. When you were both gone."

"Who was it—do you know?"

"No—a hard looking man that came to the side door—red-headed, with a bad eye."

"All right, Nellie, thank you."

The envelope was unsealed, with the flap lying open. As she started to place it on her father's desk, it slid off, and the small dingy slip of paper it contained, fluttered out upon the floor; and as she picked it up and replaced it in the envelope, she could not help reading the scrawl upon it.

"How about the Richard Plimsoll?" it ran. "What are you going to do for us?"

Miss Ruth puzzled seriously over this missive; the Richard Plimsoll—what could it mean?

When her father arrived, he read it slowly and promptly threw it into the waste basket.

Ruth asked him, "Whom was it from?"

"O, some crank, I suppose," he said. "My mail is full of stuff like that."

On the whole it was a most unsatisfactory answer. But the questioner was scarcely, under the circumstances, in a position to ask more. Evidently it was of small account, anyhow.

He seemed rather gloomy through the evening, she thought; but then he seemed always depressed these days since she had returned home.

Chapter XV

PRACTICAL POLITICS

MISS RUTH THORNDIKE sat on the arm of her father's chair, at the close of the summer evening meal—all fluffs and tucks and bows and muslin, preventing his threatened attack on his newspapers.

"Look here, young man," she said, taking his chin in her slim, white fingers and holding up his eyes to hers. "You've had something on your mind lately, and I want to know what it is. What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is too."

"There's nothing whatever," he repeated, reaching up and putting away her hand, preparatory to starting on his reading.

"Look here, Dad," she cried, "I won't have it. You've got to tell me. You're so foolish, you men. You don't think you can hide it from me when you're blue, do you? Don't you suppose a woman can see. I knew it just the minute I came home. Now what's the matter; tell me, please."

"Where do you get such notions into your head, Ruth?" asked her father, giving a relenting smile.

Miss Ruth Thorndike's shrewd eyes told her she had made her first gain. She was down on the floor now, a graceful little heap of colour by her father's knees.

"Is it politics?" she persevered.

He laughed.

"It is," she cried. "I might have known it from last year. You were so vicious last fall there was no living with you."

"I'm awfully glad," she said with a little sigh of relief. "I was afraid it might be something else?"

"What do you mean?"

"O, I don't know; I couldn't imagine."

Her father moved a little in his chair.

"But now all we've got to do is to make you governor," she said, with her accustomed vigour.

William Thorndike was silent.

"What are the chances?" she asked.

"I don't know, Ruth."

"O, come, Dad," she pleaded, "Give me a chance, please. Why can't you make a confidante of me? I've got sense enough to understand it. Perhaps I could help you—you don't know. Are the Perkins people working for it?"

"O, yes."

"Well, can they get it?"

"That's the question."

"How's Mr. Black? What does he think? Have you seen him?"

"Yes, once or twice. He thinks I have a good chance. But they're making a great canvass for it—already."

"Well, they can't beat us, Dad," she cried, straightening up. You trust to *me*, William, I'll make you governor," she went on with mock dignity. "That is if you don't worry. You won't worry, will you, Dad?" she pleaded, patting his hand. "You wouldn't if you knew how miserable it made me to see you."

"Well, now you may read," she said getting up quickly, having obtained the principal information that she wanted. Another enterprise had been determined upon by this crazy young conspirator.

"I'm going driving a little while," she said. "I'm half stifled indoors."

"All right," murmured the preoccupied man of the house, buried at last up to his ears in his newspaper. "Only get back before it gets too dark."

"O, of course."

Ten minutes later she was on her way to Grimdale. The sun was not yet set; the whole long summer twilight stretched before her. Quiet lay on the dusty country roads; the farmers' rattling wagons were already in the barn; the slow and heavy workaday travel between the towns was done. She fared alone through the cool and happy silence; up the long grey road, through the deepening wayside green. Now and then she heard some woman calling from her farmhouse; now and then, with shrill distinctness, the cries of distant children at their play; and now and then, by some damp corner of a wood, the thrice-delicious fragrance

of the wild grape blossoms hung, where she passed, across the shadowy road, faint as the memory of some old song.

She was not on the main travelled highway by the river but the side road parallel upon the hill. As she drove out from a passage through the trees, the sun was set, the sombre western mountains stood out in huge relief against the sky, and the lighting of the long valley for another night had begun again. Far up and down she watched it through the grey evening—the magic of the coming of the lights—yellow and white and blue, dotted here and there upon the darkening mountain side, lonely mysterious yellow spots amid the woods; trailing up the main highway along the serpent river, flashing to the north in a great cluster of white and blue, within the black cavern of shadow underneath Mt. Totec, on the streets of Grimdale; the dawn of the toy daylight of those strange little creatures of the valley, the lighting of the tiny homes of men, upon who knew what hopes and weariness and misery.

The great horse strode steadily forward; the slight girl in the high dog-cart, but half observant of the beauty of the coming night, sat talking busily to herself, framing her campaign. And so they came down toward Grimdale, rattled in across the railroad tracks, passed through the main street of the city, with its dark store windows, to the place of residences and up the driveway to the big, black, towered house upon the hill.

A few moments more and she was waiting in the

high parlour of Morgan Black, by the dim light of one gas jet in the high, bronze chandelier. The form of the great manufacturer, emerging from the recesses of his study in the rear, came heavily and deliberately toward her.

"Good evening, Miss Ruth," he said.

"Good evening, Mr. Black."

"Have you left your father outside?"

"No, I drove up alone."

A sharp look of surprise shone a moment beneath the thick grey eyebrows and was gone.

"I came up to talk politics with you," she went on.

"I see."

"And I think as long as that's what I want," she said, laughing, "you ought to take me out into your study. That's the place you always go for politics, isn't it?"

"Come in," he said gravely.

They passed from the stiff barren parlour, into the more comfortable room behind—the man grey, and slow and unmoved, the girl flushed with anxiety and the excitement of the thing.

"There's something that's worrying me to death," she said, seating herself across the table from him. 'I got perfectly desperate, and finally I made up my mind I'd come up here and see you, as the men do.'

"So that's the way the men do?" asked Black, with grim amusement.

"Why, of course they do. I don't know much politics, but I know that. When they want something very much they come to you."

"What is it you want."

"I want my father to be governor."

"O, I see! that's *all*, is it?"

"Yes, and I want you to help me. That is, I don't want you to do anything you don't care to, you know, but I want you to help me, to tell me things—just how everything stands."

The grey master of Grimdale sat silent watching her, as she talked.

"They say you men always trade in politics," she went on vivaciously. "So I've got something to swap."

Morgan Black laughed outright.

"What is it? Are you going to appoint me brigadier-general of the militia," he asked, "when you're elected?"

They laughed together; Ruth saw with delight that the ice was broken.

"No, really, I'm serious," she said. "It's something I heard—that I thought you might like to know, perhaps."

"What is it?"

"Well, it's about the cotton mills. There're a lot of those mills you're interested in, aren't there?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, it's about that cut, you know."

"Yes."

"You knew there was likely to be trouble over it."

"I heard so."

"And you knew the mule-spinners' union had voted to go out, as soon as it is made."

"They say so."

"O, dear, I'm awfully disappointed. I'm not going to have anything to tell you after all. And you know all about the mule-spinners—and their meeting last Sunday and how they voted unanimously to strike."

"Unanimously?"

"Yes."

"You're sure of that?"

"Yes, I got it through just one man. And they say they're unanimous everywhere—all through the other mills."

"Is that so?" said Black musingly.

"Then I *did* tell you something," said Ruth delightedly.

"Yes," said Black, "just what I wanted to know—how they stood in their unions. It may make a big difference in our plans. Everybody's thought they would not make much of a fight; that they'd disagree among themselves and we'd break 'em up. They've kept their meetings pretty close.

"So they were unanimous;—they'll make a fight," he said.

"Yes, sir," answered Ruth, though really he was talking more to himself than to her.

"Now, what can I do for *you*?" asked Black.

"I want you to give me your advice first," said the girl, "and perhaps your help some time, if you will."

"What do you want to know?"

"Well, in the first place, do you think if he's going to run for governor, he ought to have this cut in

wages. I don't. But he won't pay any attention to me, and the rest of them think just as he does."

"You're right. You're the best politician of them all."

"Then you think as I do?"

"Certainly. Your father can't get the nomination against that Perkins crowd, with a labour fight on his hands."

"No, I don't think he can either."

"The party can't afford to have the fight now either. They've got to drop this cut business until after this campaign. Let it rest a few months, it won't do any of them any harm. I guess I'll see some of them myself. I think perhaps it might have some influence."

Ruth listened with excited pleasure to this mild statement of Morgan Black.

"O, I hope you *will* see them," she said.

"I've kept out of this so far," said Black. "But I guess I will." He shook his head thoughtfully.

"Now Mr. Black," said Ruth, "I wish you'd tell me just what you think my father's chances are—honestly?"

"They're good. I think he ought to get it, if he keeps out of this thing. Those other fellows are hustling, but—"

"Yes," broke in Ruth excitedly, "but we can hustle too."

"Yes," commented Black, "so it seems."

"And then?" asked Ruth.

"It's Stark County's turn," said the manufacturer,

"and your father's got a good deal of strength. Yes, I should say he had a first-class chance."

"You think so, do you?" said Ruth. "I'm so glad." She sat silent with pleasure for a few moments after. It was Morgan Black who broke the silence.

"Aren't you the girl who went down into the Huddle alone, and passed that new health ordinance in Ellington?"

"Well—I went down there."

"They say that young Mayhew didn't know how that passed."

"No, he didn't—that is, not till just lately."

"You know him well?" asked the manufacturer, with his keen eyes on her face.

"Yes," said Ruth blushing slightly, "we were brought up together."

"Of course," said Black. "Well, I remember the time when the Mayhews were about all there was in your town, and it wasn't so long ago either. I used to work with your grandmother in the Mayhew cotton mills, when she was a young lady. I suppose you knew that?"

"Yes."

"Are you ashamed of it?" he asked, eyeing her shrewdly.

"No sir, why should I be?"

"That's the kind of talk I like to hear, young woman. That's it, why should you be? The best stock of New England worked in those old cotton mills; the people who were willing to do something."

"Yes," he mused, "I used to work there beside

your grandmother—and a mighty pretty girl she was too, and smart. I guess you take some of your spirit from her,” he said in shrewd compliment.

“That Mayhew boy,” he went on—“they tell me he’s a good deal of a theorist. He’s one of those fellows who’s going to smash the tariff, isn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I guess we’ll have a tariff some little time yet,” commented the manufacturer dryly. “It never seemed to do any great damage to this section of the country; do you think?”

“No, sir, I don’t.”

“That’s the way it seems to me, anyway. He won’t feel so bad about it when he gets a little older.

“So you went down through the Huddle, yourself?” he continued.

“Yes.”

“That’s right. See things for yourself. Then you’ll know. What do you think of it?”

“It was terrible. I didn’t know there were such places in the world.”

“You never saw where those people came from, did you?”

“No.”

“Well, I have. Mud huts with turf roofs and pigs and chickens in and out the doorways. You wouldn’t feel so much excited if you’d seen those places. The tenements in the Huddle are marble palaces beside them. You don’t want to worry too much,” he went on, “about how the world’s going to get on, Miss Ruth. That’s the trouble with these reformers; they take too

much personal responsibility on their minds. But you watch and see; the world will be going on, these cotton mills will be running, somehow, a number of years, after those fellows get brand new theories. Things are getting along and they're getting better and not worse, all the time."

"I wish you'd tell me just how you look at that," said Ruth earnestly. "I've thought about it so much since I went through the Huddle."

"Well, in the first place, those fellows who come over here aren't much worse off than they were across, are they?"

"No, I suppose not," said Ruth.

"No, I guess not!" he repeated dryly. "They get five times as much and they don't have to live any better unless they want to. They're rich! Every bureau in the Polish tenements has got a roll of bills in it as big as your fist. You can see that from the papers. They're all the time losing it, and stealing it and fighting over it. They've got so much they don't know what to do with it.

"You see 'em coming from the train in their cow-hide boots, walking in the middle of the road, at first; the women in their shawls. That shows it, in one thing—those shawls. You're a woman. You see how these women dress. It's the same way with all of 'em—shawls first, and cotton skirts and bare feet; then these capes and crazy hats; and then coats and dresses like the rest of you. And by and by, when they have children, they grow up and live like human beings. You've seen how the Irish have done."

"Yes," said Ruth.

"It depends, how you take hold of a thing like this, whether you're looking around for sentimental trouble, or whether you want facts."

Ruth approved his sentiments.

"I'm inclined to think that Congress ought to give the cotton mills an appropriation," said Black slowly. "We run a kind of training school for them. We take the cheapest kind of poor labour, and we turn out good mechanics and civilised people. I can remember the first Irishman that came into this section. He was a curiosity, something like an Indian would be now. They used to drive in to see him; yes, and scare their children with him—sayin' he'd catch 'em, if they were bad."

"Really?"

"Yes, I can remember it distinctly. And now we're more than a third Irish; and good citizens, most of them, too. First the Irish, then the French, and then the Poles. You'll hear a good deal about cheap labour coming in and driving out the old—those hungry fellows, from Europe, swarming in here. Well, they don't drive 'em to anything worse, do they? they push 'em up all the time—into better things. You watch them. The young Irish and the French. They've got better work than in the cotton mills, now, haven't they? They're carpenters and machinists and priests and lawyers. Now and then some of 'em have hard luck, of course—the old ones, and children. But it's the same everywhere, isn't it? The same with the people you know. They can't all succeed. But what does that

amount to? You've got to see things as they are—as a whole.”

The girl sat listening with excited interest as he talked—that grey old fatalist, who saw and thought in multitudes and races; indifferent to the individual as the great universal forces of nature and society, forever trying their ten thousand to improve their one.

“Thank you very much,” said Ruth when he had finished. “I don’t believe I ever thought of it that way.

“And now I think I ought to be going,” she said, getting up. “I hope I haven’t done anything I ought not to in asking you to help me about my father. If I have, you’ll forgive me, won’t you?”

“O, you aren’t the first one to come up and see me for your father,” said Black. “There’s plenty of them. Adoniram Pitkin is up here giving me advice nearly every day. ‘As regards to that,’ you know.”

Ruth laughed.

“Advice is a specialty with Adoniram,” he added.

“So I’ve noticed.”

“Adoniram is like the Irishman’s ghost—he doesn’t know when he’s dead. Well, you tell your father to drop this cut business.”

“I’d rather not, Mr. Black,” said Ruth hesitatingly. “I’d rather not have him know I was here at all.”

“O, very well. I’ll see him myself.”

“Thank you. And you think he has a good chance, don’t you?”

"Well, I wouldn't wonder if his chances would be pretty good," said Black slowly.

They passed out through the cave-like parlour to the hall, and he handed her into the dog-cart.

"I wouldn't worry much about it," he said, "if I was you." He held out his big hand to her. "When you want to talk politics again," he said, "come up and see me."

"I will," said the girl laughing.

When she had gone down the driveway, when the broad door was closed and the light from the wide hall blotted out, she turned in a changed mood and looked back again to where the great black dwelling loomed up against the purple eastern sky. A sombre sense of the significance of what she saw came over her. There he sat in his silent house—the Power, maker of men and corporations, dictator of city and county and state—Morgan Black, builder of history, last product of the industrial feudalism of New England. Huge noisy mills had grown and flourished and come down to silence at his word, railroads had followed the drawing of his pencil across the map, high figures of trade and state had come to him at his appointed time and place, and many anxious great ones, of whom she could not dream, had driven up the way she travelled now, sitting far back in the dusk of the old hacks, from the Grimdale station to the house upon the hill to be created or destroyed by his promises. And still, through his own electric wires to the great cities; along the railroads, where the express trains stopped by night against scheduled time at the

little manufacturing towns, while he went in or out of their dim-lighted sleepers, he worked across this wide, thick-settled country his unswerving will; always accomplishing and building and remoulding—through those long, leisure days of hers, by the soft, quiet nights when she was sleeping. The thought of it sobered and oppressed her.

The dog-cart passed on across the dusk, the big horse anxious to be back. They hurried homeward through the jewelled valley, through the dampness of the riverside, in the shadow of the huge, dumb mountains, standing black against the pale and faded after-light. They had scarcely started out, it seemed, before the wheels were rasping in the gravel of the driveway beside the big house in Ellington.

Ruth Thorndike entered her father's study with her usual vivacity. He was reading something on his table.

"What made you stay out so late?" he asked, putting the paper quickly into his pocket.

"O, Dad, it was so lovely!" pleaded Ruth in defence.

"I don't like to have you out so late. Something might happen to you."

"O, pshaw," she said kissing him. "What *could* happen, you old goose?"

All that evening she kept wondering about that paper he was reading when she came in. It seemed to her—she could not argue herself out of the idea—it was that odd note she had given him on Sunday, and he had thrown away.

“How about the Richard Plimsoll? What are you going to do for us?” The feeling of uneasiness and of fear grew upon her as she remembered. The Richard Plimsoll—the Richard Plimsoll—what did this mean, this revival of forgotten things; what could it mean, if not a threat?

Chapter XVI

THE DEAD MILL

THERE was a faint knock on the ground glass in John Mayhew's office door.

"Come in," said Mayhew, rising from his desk.

A young woman entered—a tall Irish girl, with a sad and bitter face—pale, thin-cheeked, with deep, revengeful eyes, and a tight-set mouth, drawn like a straight pale gash across her face.

"Is this Mr. Mayhew?" she asked with a faint Irish accent.

"It is," he answered. "Won't you sit down?"

The casual visitor in the room said good-bye and went out. The eyes of the silent woman followed his figure until the door closed after it.

"I've come here to ask you to do me a favour, if you please, sir," she said at last. "I want you to go and see a man and advise him." There was a curious mixture of timidity and defiance in her manner.

"Why can't he come here himself?"

"Well, you see," she answered in a low voice, "he don't dare to."

"Why not? Is there any reason he can't come?"

"That's what I want you to tell him."

"Oh."

"The police are after him, and he wants to know if they've any right to be."

"Who is he? What's his name?"

The woman's eyes went carefully about the room again.

"John Carney, sir," she whispered.

"Then Carney's back?" said Mayhew.

"Yes, he didn't dare to show up here before."

"And now what does he intend to do?"

"I don't know, sir. I think he wants to find out what he can do."

John Mayhew hesitated. "I ought not to do it," he said at last.

"Why not?" she demanded. "Why can't you see him? You might straighten the whole thing out."

"Possibly," said Mayhew, "but I'm afraid——"

"That's right," she broke out fiercely. "That's right. You're all alike. When a boy's down you won't one of you give him a chance. It's a shame—it's a dirty shame. O, my God, what shall I do; what shall I do?"

She leaned forward, with her arms on the edge of the old desk and broke into a paroxysm of crying. Great, deep, coughing sobs racked her slender body and shook her bowed head as it lay crushing her hat brim down against her hands.

Mayhew looked at her helplessly for a moment.

"Stop. Don't do that," he said. "I'll go."

She remained with her head down for several moments, endeavouring to regain her self control.

"Thank you," she said brokenly at last. "I hope you'll excuse me for the way I acted," she went on proudly, straightening up again.

"O, that's all right," Mayhew answered awkwardly. "Where shall I meet him?"

"At Starkwater."

"At Starkwater; whom's he stopping with there?"

"Nobody; he's in the old mill—the lower one—sleeping just for a few days, keeping out of sight."

"And I've got to see him there?"

"He *could* come in here, somewhere, I suppose."

"No, I'll see him there. What time?"

"To-morrow afternoon, about five, if you could, sir."

The woman got up to go. "How much do I owe you, sir," she said with embarrassment, fumbling at her old purse.

"Nothing, nothing whatever, unless I do something more than I have yet."

"Not anything?"

"Nothing at all."

"Well then, good night, sir. And I'm very grateful to you, sir."

"That's all right; good night."

He returned to his desk when she was gone and made a memorandum—an entirely unnecessary one—of this trip to Starkwater the next afternoon. Then he sat down and thought it over.

John Mayhew could remember, in his childhood, the latter days of the glory of Starkwater. There was noisy prosperity in its little valley then, and lights and feasting in the grim house of the master; shed was joined to shed and storehouse to storehouse; Adoniram Pitkin's frantic enterprise projected itself into a hundred untried schemes. Then came the crash. Adoniram Pitkin had gone down magnificently into pompous bankruptcy, and become as he was to-day—the byword and source of inextinguishable laughter in the great houses on the hills.

The abomination of desolation is on Starkwater now this score of years. Back from the railroad, not even on the main travelled highway, it sits brooding down to utter ruin and decay; a cluster of empty factory cottages, a little line of stone and wooden mills, with their grey, staring images in the sleek, dark mill pools—clapboards falling, sash and windows gone. The old and ragged weeds grow within the mill yards; the phoebes build their nests in the deserted sheds by the pond. And through a mid-day silence you hear the drizzle of the water through the leaking dam; the rattle of a kingfisher springing from a white, dead branch across the pool, and the insistent clamour of the crows that haunt the neighbouring hill. Occasionally old Adoniram Pitkin himself, in his straw hat and old unbuttoned frock coat flits in and out the office, at the old upper mill. He has an invention here, they say, a contrivance of his own, a sort of monstrous mechanical pet. From time to time he fusses at it with his trembling hands; “per-

fecting it," he says. When he is done the Starkwater mills will start again—and not before.

In the meanwhile they live there alone in the old house—the father and the faded wife and their idle son. The house is theirs, held back from the creditors in some way I don't exactly understand by being owned by both the man and his wife. There was a little property, too, remaining in the wife's name; they say the manufacturers up and down the valley even gave them a contribution to live upon. But there they are, at any rate, in the old house—one servant now, one old family horse in the great barn, though the carriage house is still full of their old carriages, dusty, moth-eaten ghosts of former grandeur.

I often wonder if the old man ever looks down upon the vacant street—the rotting factories, the little blindfolded houses, with the boards across their windows, and thinks of their bitter arraignment of him. Where are they now—those families that have drifted in and out of there from Ireland and Canada; those little noisy households underneath the hill? Broken, dissipated, gone, the empty buildings say to him, by your utter incompetence and foolishness. If there had been another master instead of you—a stronger, firmer, wiser man—Poor old Adoniram Pitkin! Is there any heavier responsibility in the world, or more terrible failure, than in this standing guardian of a factory, playing God to a thousand men and parcelling out to them their daily bread? Is there anything more desolate and pathetic than these deserted factory villages, poor little mistakes of civilisation, grey, foolish

ruins, of a thing which, after all this toil and sacrifice and pain, had better never have been.

But if everyone else treated the broken family with a certain touch of scorn, Ruth Thorndike did not. The men she did not like and said so—the son she thought ridiculous; the father an old bore. But she never made distinction in her conduct toward them. I think perhaps she prided herself a little on the fact. Certainly it was appreciated by at least one person. A wan smile came to the disappointed old face of the mother, whenever the girl drove up to visit her. “You’re such good company, Ruth,” she said following her wistfully to the door that next afternoon, “I hate to have you go.”

“I must,” said Ruth decidedly. “Don’t you see what time it is? I ought to be home this minute. You’ll see me often enough before the Ball is over.”

She stopped and kissed the older woman warmly on the cheek (I wonder how many others kiss the poor old lonely woman now).

“Good-bye,” said the buoyant voice of the girl.

“Good-bye,” the thin old voice of the woman replied, as she turned back into the dim old house.

Ruth Thorndike thought as she drove away of what she had seen, a smile at the corner of her mouth, a sad little look deep down in her dark eyes.

It was an early autumn afternoon turning evening, a day all blue and gold; a deep, soft, flawless sky—the lovely, tender dreamy blue of dear October—arched down to the white misty line of the horizon; the plaided mountain sides; the dim edge of the golden

earth, green, and umber and red gold, touched irregularly by the rich hand of Fall. Along the dusty roadside where she drove, the hoarse old grasshoppers were droning through their Fall death song.

As she turned the jut in the hillside by the old hulk of the lower mill, still engrossed in her thoughts, suddenly Tom, the pony, stopped short. Two men stood in the road—one already at the horse's bridle, a dark man, in slouchy clothes, a derby hat, and a collarless shirt, with the neckband frayed up against his strong, red neck. The other, a small man, with red stubble on his face and furtive eyes, remained in the background.

"What do you want? Drop that rein!" rang out the clear resolute voice of the girl.

She struck viciously at him with her whip. The dark man reached out a mutilated right hand, and caught the whip lash deftly without the slightest exhibition of concern.

He fixed his cool blue eyes on her face. "Your name's Thorndike," he said in a hoarse voice, as if making a statement of fact.

"Isn't it?" he added.

"Yes."

"Well, we want you to take a message for us—to your father."

Silence from the stiff little figure in the cart.

"You tell him we're back. He'll know who. And we're sick of waiting. And we give him just two days more. If he ain't ready then, we'll fix him another way. Two days—and that's all—understand?"

No answer.

"You'll take that message to him, will you?"

"I'll do as I please," said the high-spirited girl.

"O, you will, will you?"

The girl by a quick motion snatched the whip from his hands and cut him with it across the face.

"Drop that rein," she cried.

"You little devil, you," said the man, still holding to the bridle.

"Drop it," said the red-haired man. "Here's somebody comin'."

The two men turned, ran back of the carriage, and up toward the woods beyond the fields across from the mill.

"Remember!" said the dark one as he went by her. "You want to tell him; if you don't, both of you'll be sorry."

The girl whipped the pony down the road toward home.

The figure on the top of the hill came swinging rapidly down toward her. It was John Mayhew.

"What was it, Ruth?" he said. "Didn't somebody stop you down there?"

"O, nothing," she answered quickly. "Two men, that's all—tramps, I suppose."

"What'd they say to you?" he asked angrily.

"O, nothing much. One of them just wanted to know the time of day, that's all. He was drunk, I think."

She lied with the quick facility of a woman defending a dear cause. Her manner was perfect, but her

face was still pale from her encounter. John Mayhew looking up understood at once something of what had happened; saw with regret the false position he had driven her to.

"You must quit this driving alone," he said. "You'll get into trouble one of these days."

"Nonsense," she said, "I've never had any trouble."

"No, but you can't tell what those fellows—" He stopped, realising again that he should not seem to know who the men were, or "fellows like them, I mean, might do.

"At any rate," he went on, "you might ask me to get in and protect you on the way home."

"I will," she said, "provided you won't preach."

"All right," he answered, laughing.

She had carried the conversation her way, and kept it going as she chose, talking principally herself—whimsical, lively, grotesque, little comments and descriptions, of people and things she had recently seen. He listened as she rattled on, thinking how well she was carrying out her little deception. He understood that he could not help her in her trouble now, even if he had the power to.

He had no right to do or say anything, of course, but as it was he could not resist a word—a sudden outburst in a short pause in her talking.

"I want to ask you a favour, Ruth," he said, looking steadily away from her. "If anything ever came up that I could help you in, you'd let me know, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," said the girl flushing.

"You promise me that?"

"All right, I promise you," said the girl hurrying away from the subject. "Isn't Mr. Pitkin the funniest old creature?"—she rattled on.

They had reached the top of the big hill now—the last before the descent into the valley. Below them lay the jumble of buildings in Ellington, the tenements, the red of the mills. To the north the great, smoky banners of Grimdale went trailing eastward down the slow wind.

"Isn't it lovely," she said softly.

The hoarse chorus of whistles from below called out the closing of another day.

Suddenly, with a little impetuous gesture, she put her gloved hand over upon his.

"You don't think I'm ungrateful—or stupid," she asked—"only you understand—"

With the touch of her hand all his stern resolutions had left him.

"I don't understand—I don't think anything—only—I love you Ruth; I love you, always, forever."

The thing was said; the flood gates of silence had gone down, bearing with them all his prudence and his pride. He was in a strange new land, where the very senses acted strangely. His voice was faint, and dim and far away; the pale face of the girl seemed like a vision in a dream; he knew with an odd feeling of half surprise that he had seized her hand and was clasping it in both his own.

"You remember," he hurried on, "those first days—the cupola—fair Rosamond and all that; the first

day that they sent you trudging off to school. Ever since—at school and college—always, ever since my first childhood, it was you Ruth—always and forever.”

Never, till he dies, will the sense of that time leave him—the long, dim valley underneath; the failing smoke of Grindale to the north, a tardy whistle trailing its long call; the silence of the mountain road; the fragrance of her glove.

The small hand in his own made a sadly feeble effort to escape. He stooped and kissed it.

“Do you love me, Ruth,” he said; “can’t you say you do?”

It was all gone—with the same strange swiftness that it came.

She had drawn her hand away.

“Don’t; please don’t,” she said sharply. “We mustn’t even think about such things.”

“Why not?” he pleaded. “Can’t you answer?”

She had regained something of her self control now.

“No,” she said. “I cannot even answer—why, we must forget this.”

Reality had returned again—the old grim logic of every day.

“I suppose so,” he replied despondently. “I ought not to have asked it. I should have had more sense. But I simply couldn’t help it, Ruth. Forgive me.”

“No, don’t say that,” she said quickly. “Don’t say that.”

“Why not?” he returned eagerly.

“Because—perhaps, if things were different—”

“Well?”

"No, no—not now—it's no use now."

"What is it?"

She did not answer.

"Your father?"

"Yes."

"He hates me. O, what has he got against me," John Mayhew went on passionately. "What have I ever done to him? For a mere difference in politics—first he has tried to drive me out of my business; and now this. Is it fair, Ruth? Do you think you ought to be governed by it?"

"It isn't that, John, really."

"What is it?"

"I'll tell you, John," she said in her old frank way. "My father is ill—we're afraid he may have some dreadful disease, if he isn't careful. It's not dangerous now, you know, and it may never be—not for years and years. Only he must not worry—that is, any more than can be helped."

She stopped.

"And you feel?" he suggested.

"I've got to stand by him, haven't I?" said the girl. "There's just us two, you know."

"So you see?" she asked with a faint little smile.

"No matter what I thought now I couldn't be engaged—to you or to anybody else."

"To me especially," he said sadly.

"Well, you know how he would feel about it. He doesn't like you—you know that. It wouldn't do for me to bring more anxiety on him than he has."

"But can't you promise—"

"No, no, no, nothing—nothing," said the girl.

She had started up the pony as they were talking, and that amiable and most sagacious beast had already gone a fair share of the short distance which remained down into the town. Soon they were down in the old street, in the vicinity of John Mayhew's home. He got out to leave her, but paused a moment by the cart.

"There's one thing you have promised," he said. "If you are ever in trouble, you will send for me."

"If I am ever in trouble—" she said and stretched out her hand.

For a moment he stood there, grasping the firm, small hand. Then he turned quickly and walked away home.

Chapter XVII

THIRTY DAYS FOR VAGRANCY

JOHN MAYHEW had given his consent to go to Starkwater, partly from his pity for the Desmond girl, partly from his boyish friendship for John Carney—in the hope that possibly he could induce the man to drop the affair and go away. Now that he had this little glimpse into Ruth Thorn-dike's relation to the matter, her untold fear and worry at this unknown thing which threatened her, he was more anxious than before to go. He left the house immediately after supper and walked out into the still street. He was on fire with the events and emotions of the day. He must do something. The thought came to him that it was not yet too late to go to Starkwater.

The full moon was mounting to the sky; he knew the country like the back of his own hand; it was only two miles and a half. Why not go and have the whole thing done with? With a sudden resolve, he set his hat more firmly on his head and started down the road.

Such nights come only in October. Below him stretched the valley, saturated, filled like a mighty cup with thick moonlight. Surely it had a substance of its own, this light, lying dim and rich and mystical

on the western slopes, with the black, solid shadows along the edges of the woods to the east—pale green on the oaks, deep gold upon the golden hickories and elms; fallen in molten streams upon the pale white roadway, with its laced shadows before him. The sound of his footsteps on the roadway, the sudden noise of some little animal in the thicket, the deep, persistent silence of the woods—and he was come at last to the edge of the village of Starkwater, to the vicinity of the old lower mill.

A path stretched off here from the roadside to below the mill; he knew it well. Here most likely the two men would come and go. He stopped a moment; and then plunged into the half darkness of the leaves. Below the mill, below the dam, was a little concavity of the hill leading down to the bed of the old stream, a regular tramps' kitchen, easy of access, protected by the woods. Suddenly he saw the angry embers of a fire between the leaves. They were there, two black figures, silent, motionless, silhouetted against the fire-light.

"Hello," called Mayhew.

The figures sprung to their feet—the large one slowly and defiantly; the small one whipped suddenly behind a tree with the agility of a wild animal.

"Hello," said Mayhew again. "Is John Carney there?"

"Who are you?" said Carney's voice.

"Mayhew."

"O, come on over. How're you?" said Carney tak-

ing his hand. "Sit down," he continued, indicating a place beside him on a log.

Carney was not a figure you would care to meet at night—his hoarse voice, his broken derby cocked down upon his forehead, his wild eyes, staring out from underneath the brim, bloodshot with drink. It seemed scarcely possible a man could gallop down the hill so fast.

The small figure returned.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Carney jeering. "You act as if you was afraid of something—you're like an old woman."

"That's all right," said the red-headed man, in a surly voice. "You don't know who it might be."

They were a precious pair—shoulders down, collars up, trousers wrinkled at the ankles, frayed and nasty at the bottom—the typical American tramp at home.

There was an awkward little pause at first.

"You wanted to see me about something, didn't you?" said Mayhew, breaking it.

"We did want to see you," said Carney, "to find out where we stood."

"Well?"

"Well, in the first place they can't arrest us for what we did at the house, can they?"

"I don't know whether they could or not."

"How could they? They wouldn't any of 'em testify against us."

"Are the police after you?"

"After us, yes! They've been chasin' us all over

New England the past two months. There was a week there they pawed over every freight that went out of here."

"But you got out all right."

"O, there's ways," said the man suggestively.

"Well," said the lawyer. "They must have *something* against you."

"What is it?"

"Well, what's the matter with blackmail," said Mayhew boldly.

"Blackmail?" repeated Carney angrily.

"Yes; that's what they'd call it, isn't it?"

"You can call it what you please. But they won't chase me on that. Thorndike'll see to that."

"Why not?"

"Because he don't dare to. He's just been nominated for governor of the state, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, he won't bring that up. He don't want that aired in court. Don't you worry. Thorndike won't appear in this thing," said Carney with an oath, "though he's back of the whole job. That ain't the game. There's something else."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if he gets us in court on something else, he's got us; that puts us out of the way. We've just got to shut out mouths and take it."

"Well, then, you'll find he's got something."

"Vagrancy," suggested the side-partner.

"Yes, or something worse. I tell you one thing. You don't want to run up against Thorndike."

"That's all right," said Carney, glowering at the speaker. "He don't scare me any."

"Where we fell down," he went on, "was in that thing at the house. We was all right till that. We could have just stayed still and they couldn't have touched us. And if you'd come into it—"

"I don't come into that kind of a game," interrupts Mayhew angrily.

"Blackmail, I suppose you call it?"

"Yes."

"I suppose it's blackmail when a man steals money from you and you try and get it back again."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"I know that; and you ain't likely to. You had your chance once; it's too late for you to come in now."

"I know this," Mayhew went on disregarding him, "If I had a claim against a man that was legal, I'd take it to law; if it isn't good enough for that, it isn't worth much."

"That's all right; these big fellers, when they do a thing, they ain't generally where the law can get at 'em. They know how to do it. Thorndike—damn him, he's a good thing; his game makes ours look sick; there's plenty of honest men than he is up here in the county jail to-day, and they like him so well they make him governor."

"Why shouldn't they? He's one of the leading republicans of the state."

"Yaas," jeered the man, "he's been a hot republican, especially the times they needed him most. They'd

like to make him governor, if they knew what we do.

"Say," he went on, "you're in with the democrats. What'd the democrats give for something rich about the other fellow's candidate for governor, something sure—couldn't help beatin' him?"

"I don't know," said Mayhew, "not much I guess. I don't know anybody who'd give you anything."

"They'd use it if they had it."

"Maybe they would, if they got it out of you, but you wouldn't get anything out of it."

"How about the newspapers?"

"That's worse!"

"Why?"

"What newspapers dare to print any such stuff as that? I've got just one thing to say to you people," said Mayhew, firing his final bolt, "you haven't got a show in the world—my advice to you is to get out of here—"

"No," shouted Carney, with an oath, "not till we're damned good and ready. I'll tell you one thing though," he went on. "It won't be much longer. We've given him two days; he can take it or leave it. I'm sick of this thing; he's chased me long enough; now I'm about ready to do some of the chasin' myself. We'll throw the thing wide open, if he wants to, and have it out."

The furtive side-partner, who sat silently watching the two men as they talked, broke in.

"Yes, and lose everything you're after."

"Ah, shut up," said Carney.

The blood mounted into his face and eyes; for the moment he was an insane man, carried beside himself—a monomaniac of hatred.

"It ain't the money I'm after;" he said, "God damn him, it's him; he's had me all my life; he's ground me and driven me and hounded me! I want my turn at him—just once."

"What do I get out of this?" asked the other man.

"You can get what you can."

"All right then, I will."

There was a queer undertone in the man's voice, that made Mayhew look up. He was a strange little beast, this man; nervous, watchful, apparently on edge all the evening. He got up now and stretched.

"Well, I'm not going to sit here all night," he said.

"Well, go on then," said Carney angrily.

The man moved up the path in the direction of the old mill.

"Walk along with me a ways, Shawn," said Mayhew starting up the pathway in the direction of the road.

"All right," said Carney.

"I'm a nice thing, ain't I?" he said, hoarsely breaking a little silence.

Mayhew did not answer.

"Well, if you don't like me," he went on, the thick anger rising in his voice again, "You can thank Thorndike; he made me what I am. I was all right till he chucked me out and began chasin' me. Yes,

and I ain't the only one. There's plenty of fellers he's sent on the road, damn him. I wish I had him between my knees just once—just once."

His strong hands clinched in the air before him.

"All I want out of this thing," he went on, when the outburst had spent itself, "is for him to give me a chance to start over again; where I was when he threw me down; and if he don't, God help him."

"Look here, Shawn," said Mayhew, stopping in the path. "I came up here to see if I couldn't help you out and I want to do it. Now let's talk horse sense. You're in bad business and bad company. What's more, you can't make anything out of this thing, whatever it is. I'll tell you that now. You can't buck Thorndike, and you'll find it out sooner or later. Now what you want to do is drop it and get away. Go West and start over again. There's people who'd be glad to help you—and I'm one of them."

"Much obliged to you," said the man, obstinately, "but I'm goin' to see this through."

They walked a few steps in silence.

"Who was it sent you out?" asked Carney at last.

"You know as well as I do."

"*She* did?"

"Yes."

"She's stood by me through the whole thing," said Carney in a softer voice. "She's never give me up—not once."

"By God," he went on bitterly. "She deserved something better'n me. Look at me. What am I now? I'm no better'n a damned beast."

"What makes you keep it up then?" said Mayhew. "You owe her something better than this and you know it. If you won't do it for your own sake, you might at least think of her."

They came to where the path ended in the road.

"Come, now Shaun," said Mayhew in a last appeal; "drop it; break away. You can do it if you want to."

"No," said the man, his old bravado returning; "he'll drop it before I do; and don't you forget it."

"Well, that settles it, I suppose," said Mayhew, turning to go. "I've warned you. Now I'm through. Good-bye."

"So long," said the man.

He stood a few moments coolly watching Mayhew as he walked away; then turned and disappeared into the path again. When Mayhew looked back at the first corner of the road he was gone.

John Mayhew thought the whole thing over as he strode toward home. What a strange affair it was, if Carney told the truth, this modern duel with the intangible, but deadly weapons of Civilisation—between these two—the great man and the small, the employer and the discharged employé—the hidden shafts of the great shot into the darkness, where his tormentor lay hid; the fierce, animal hatred of the man below, ready for God knew what revenge. He was curious, of course, to know the secret of the blackmail,—it must be of some consequence, or why should Thorndike trouble with it. And it concerned himself. Well, what of it? It was of no value legally; Carney would know his ground on that; some hidden

fraud in those old days a score of years ago—well, men were the same those days as now; the same old trickery of gaining a livelihood was going on. It was nothing for him to take up now.

He had gone half a mile perhaps when he heard the rattle of wheels coming toward him. A heavy open wagon drew up, with two large men upon the front seat. They were driving rather slowly and stared down curiously as he passed.

“Good evening,” said one voice tentatively.

“Good evening,” he replied.

The man whipped up his horse and drove along. Mayhew turned and watched them as they went. It was John Heenan and a patrolman. He walked along wondering. When he had almost reached the town, the wagon passed again, going to the town; in the vehicle there was a third man. On the back seat, handcuffed to the big policeman, sat John Carney.

It was the routine thing—the most routine, with one exception, of all the sentences in the old police record book—thirty days for vagrancy. And yet that thirty days would take the prisoner safely by the whole campaign, beyond election day. It certainly, whether instigated by Thorndike or not, could not have been calculated better in his interests. But then Garvin was still at large. The question came to Mayhew more than once, how did that man escape?

Chapter XVIII

THE DEFENCE OF THE FAITH

BEING founded on the republican rock of the tariff, you can imagine how the campaign of 188- came upon us. What, strangle industry in its cradle; what, snatch the food from the mouth of the American workingman; what, extinguish forever the smoke of our chimneys from the landscape! The thought brought down more than one fat prophet of prosperity to his final stroke of apoplexy. Men with silk hats and kid gloves and long frock coats wasted away with their piteous concern for the American workingman—not weeks during the campaign, but months before, stalking sadly and indignantly from one public platform to another; a despondent press pointed out a gloomy future; an occasional pulpit flamed forth in awful jeremiads. O, the unspeakable desolation, the bare cinders of the world which would remain after the cessation of the tariff and the republican party!

Those were fervent days—you remember yourself. In the past the activity of our party had consisted simply in the general scornful, sleepy defence of its sacred covenant with the Most High to govern New England. Now all at once the great basic principle

was assailed, this monster was grubbing at the very roots of industry; the arch enemy had something to fight about. The democratic convention that year was a howling menagerie of enthusiasm—not as usual over the gladiatorial combats between its own leaders, but for the blood of a foreign foe.

This terrible roar of the black proletariat rolled up to wake the drowsy echoes in the republican convention hall. Never had there been such grim determination on the faces of the bald delegates—the fat business men, the lean, whiskered, weather-beaten farmers; never had the political harangue to the Almighty by the celebrated divine at the season's opening been painted in such vivid colours; never had the orators thanked God so deeply and acrimoniously for the past and principles and purposes of their grand old party, as contrasted with those of the enemy's.

The nomination of Thorndike was carried out with the elaborate and ceremonial impressiveness of a state funeral; he was named by the senior congressman, the bitterest partisan champion in the ranks, as a great exponent of the policy they defended. And when the figure of the nominee appeared, tall, grim, black, steady, the convention broke into a great roar. There was the thing they were fighting for—the very incarnation of the spirit of manufacturing. And so the delegates went home, convinced, and the republican campaign of 188- had begun.

And now we approach the solemn covered things, the terrible arcana of the great, pure political party in action. Who am I that I should reveal them,

even if I could? And who would dare profane with vile criticism and analysis, movements so smooth, so grand, so noble, in the sight of all men? And yet political action does receive a certain impetus of forces from within. It is common knowledge, too, that the Thorndike campaign had a manager—and that manager was Roland Hyde; that Thorndike had the sympathy and counsel of the friends and neighbours of his home—this last was often alluded to with strong marks of approval on the platform all the fall. The Thorndike house had, in fact, become a sort of political headquarters. All sorts and conditions of men came up there—manufacturers, politicians, reporters, curiosity seekers. But mostly there appeared the little council of his local friends—Adoniram Pitkin, drawing without reserve on his deep wells of experience—ever and anon you heard his bass voice throughout the house—“As regards to that now let me tell you. I remember in 1869, when I was candidate—;” John Carnochan sometimes; occasionally for a mouthful of gruff speech, Morgan Black; Colonel Reginald deC. Pitkin, always ready to serve; and the dapper young congressman, the work of Thorndike’s own hands, anxious, watchful, faithful, obedient to every call to the duty of his dear patron.

But more active than all these, in and out, all over the state went Roland Hyde, the manager, weaving the fabric of the campaign. Night after night in the cities, superintending the driving of the political herd, stimulating or repressing the newspapers, making the ten thousand little necessary adjustments of private in-

terests and quarrels; always smiling, always complimenting, always smoothing with those wonderful, supple, white hands, with their diamond ring.

By day he was out among the manufacturers. "How's the business?" asks Hyde, when the proper moment has arrived. "Pretty good?" "That's good. Is there anything," says Hyde hitching up his chair, "you ought to have changed in the tariff?" "Well," says the manufacturer, looking over his shoulder, "I don't know but what, etc." "We'll remember you," says Hyde, "when they make the revision." "Got all the money you want for the campaign?" asks the manufacturer. "We've got to down these fellers!" There is plenty of it, but more always can be used—legitimately, of course, always. Roland Hyde, commercial traveller of the tariff, you might say. Only that would be too bald for work so beautiful and delicate and subtle. There is a certain parallel, of course; and the result, after William Henry Harrison Thorndike's years on the republican national committee, is not seriously in doubt.

But there was one incident in that campaign, which has never figured in the public history of it. Several times, late at night, when the small council had broken up and the servants were in bed, an odd figure—a certain man, with a cast in his eye and red stubble on his chin, entered the house of the Thorndike's, let in by the master himself, and went out again after a long conference in the study. At the close of the last meeting he disappeared into the South, and was never heard from in the town again.

Two people knew this incident beside William Thorndike himself. Roland Hyde had seen something and suspected more. But Roland Hyde was not serving his apprenticeship in politics; he had seen dirty family linen washed before. Where should it be washed if not in private? Here was nothing that should concern him, unless he were invited to take part.

Ruth Thorndike did not have this philosophic unconcern. The first night that the man had come, restless from the nervousness of the time, anxious that her father should be in bed, she heard the light steps upon the front piazza. And as she had started down stairs to warn her father, she came upon the stairway just in time to see, without being seen herself, William Thorndike himself let in this man—the slinking figure she had seen that afternoon in Starkwater—and take him into his study. She saw the figure once again; and when he came he had, it seemed, a package with him; and when he left again he carried it no longer. That was the last visit she knew of; probably it was the last made. The girl had been stunned and disheartened by what she saw. The zest of the great game they were playing, which had excited her young enthusiasm so keenly, suddenly was gone. Then all her father's denials and assurances, the prompt arrest of Carney at his threat—all these were mere bravado! There was something back—that he must conceal from everyone—even her. What could it be? She racked her memory to piece out an idea. Something disgraceful it must be. The proud spirit of the

girl was filled with the apprehension of it. Yet day by day, by mere effort of her will, she kept her face bright and carried out the lively part in life that was cast for her by nature. Now was no time to approach her father on this thing—if he chose to keep it from her—his cares would bear no adding to at present. When it was all over—when he had been chosen governor; it would be time enough for an understanding then.

And so the campaign pushed on, Ruth Thorndike taking whatever part she could in the activities at the house, but being driven out more often, riding down her favourite roads, or going to her room upon the second floor.

She was sitting there now, waiting. Lynde and Merriman had driven up a few minutes before—to talk politics with the men, she hoped.

“Thank Heaven,” said Miss Thorndike to herself at last “they don’t want me,” and just at that moment the maid came up to call her.

She was in a vicious temper that afternoon; this campaign and its hopes and fears were ruining her nerves. She went downstairs with an ill-grace, which was less than usually concealed.

“Politics, I suppose,” she said as she came into the living room. Chippy Merriman was there and Lynde and Col. Pitkin. “If it is,” she said, “I’m not going to be dragged into it. I’m going right back.”

“Listen to her,” said Merriman. “She’s really the fiercest politician in the state.”

"Ruth Thorndike, author of the Ellington health ordinance and other public measures," said Lynde.

"Speech, speech," growled Col. Pitkin.

The talk went on as it had begun, Col. Pitkin starting a discourse on the philosophy of tenement owning.

"You'll excuse me, Miss Ruth," he went on from his great height, "but that ordinance went too far. It was clever in you and all that, but the trouble with a woman is, she's too sentimental. Those people are going to live that way, and you can't change them. They don't know any better."

"They know enough to die when they have the smallpox or the typhoid fever, don't they," said Miss Ruth sharply.

"Naturally."

"Well, that was what the ordinance was made for—to give them a chance to live."

"That's all right. But they'll live just as they always did. I know all about it—your model tenements and all that. I had a friend, who built some of them and they cost him a lot of money too—with bath-tubs and all that, and the next month when he went around, they were using the bath-tubs all right. Most of 'em had coal in 'em, and one of 'em had a small pig in his and one of 'em was keeping hens. Fact, by Gad! and he had to have them all pulled out. I know one thing," said Col. Pitkin, strutting. "You wouldn't enforce all those rules on me, if I was a tenement owner."

"Well, I tell *you* one thing, we'd put you in jail if you didn't," said the promoter of the measure.

"All right!" said the military hero, imperturbably, "but I tell you again, if they'd been my tene-ments—"

"But they aren't, you know," said Ruth Thorndike, shutting him off with unnecessary brutality. "So don't let's talk about it any longer."

"They say," chimed in Merriman, "that the next mayor of Ellington didn't know just what powerful influence he had back of him when he put through that bill."

"Who's the next mayor of Ellington?"

"Why John Mayhew, of course."

"O, is he going to run, really, do you think?"

"The democrats will nominate him all right, I guess."

"When he fixes it up with the saloon keepers and Skeane," said the Colonel with deep pessimism.

"The city politics in these factory towns are certainly amusing," said Lynde.

"Are they any different from any other democratic politics?" inquired Col. Pitkin.

"John Mayhew, mayor!" went on the sarcastic Lynde.

Miss Ruth Thorndike's colour rose; she was growing belligerent.

"Why not?" said Merriman, anticipating her, "John Mayhew's all right; he'd make a mighty good mayor in my opinion. He's young; but there've been others just as young, and he's got a whole lot of sand and common sense."

"O, by the way," said Lynde, turning aside, "tell

us of your terrible adventure at Starkwater, Miss Thorndike."

"There's nothing to tell," said Ruth, "excepting I was stopped by a drunken tramp, who didn't know the time of day."

"I suppose the next thing would have been to ask you to lend him your watch," said Merriman.

"O, I don't know."

"And then," said Col. Pitkin, "our friend Mayhew appeared?"

"Yes."

"What do you suppose Mayhew was doing over in there?" asked Lynde.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Miss Ruth coldly. "I suppose he was taking a walk. He's a great walker."

"O, I didn't know. I thought perhaps he might be up there on some business."

"What do you mean?"

"O, I wondered whom he might be going over to see, that's all."

"He doesn't call on us, that's sure," said Pitkin.

"He might have been up to see his old friend Carney and solicit his vote for the city election," said Lynde.

"Or maybe to get a little democratic law business," said Col. Pitkin.

The two were getting on rather dangerous ground, judging from Miss Thorndike's cheeks and eyes.

"At any rate," said Lynde, superciliously, "It was very fortunate that he was there."

"It was," said Ruth Thorndike, her calm eyes on his face. "I could at least trust him to drive me home, without thinking he would jump out and run away at the top of every particularly steep hill."

A great calm succeeded this statement of her satisfaction, which Chippy Merriman worked with most serious industry to break. The conversation stumbled on a little further, and at last the young men found it necessary to depart.

Ruth Thorndike took her trouble to her room again. Why was John Mayhew there that day? Could it be that he had some connection with those people—for political reasons, say, or some other reason? These men knew nothing, of course, but they had awakened an old and distressing train of thought in her. O, no, no, no! Nothing but that he could own with the strictest honesty, she knew that, from every word he had spoken, and from every gesture, conscious or unconscious, he had made. But did he know and understand it all, this secret, whatever it might be, disgraceful, criminal perhaps, which was hanging over her father? The anxiety and apprehension of this thing was growing more than this proud happy little spirit could endure.

Chapter XIX

POLITICAL BANKRUPTCY

THE suspense of election night was in the air—vast changes threatening, great stakes of life and fortune at the last agonising point of play, crowds of candidates, like uncertain spirits, waiting to be born—to be created in a flash real characters of history, or relegated again, back to the formless void of a forgotten political campaign. The swarms were gathering beneath the electric lights of the great cities; across the dark face of the country the farmers' wagons went rattling to the village store. But here at Ellington, with its strange tribes within its gates, the spirit of the time, it seemed, was felt more faintly than it could be elsewhere—excepting of course in the house of the candidate for governor, where his friends were come together to receive the news.

Dingy night had fallen on the town below; the gleams of the saloons were extinguished, leaving the main street in the cold barrenness of Sunday evening. Labourers with pipes in their unshaven mouths, spelled out in mental pain the bulletins before the little newspaper office; late tellers in the election booths muttered over their unaccustomed work; occasional cries told

the news from one group to another on the street, the boys stood on the street corners later than usual, whistling, stamping, chaffing, waiting hopefully for something to turn up. But the great bulk of the population, the uninterested French, the older Irish, and the Poles—the stolid Poles—alien as strange slaves in a foreign market place—had gone indifferently home to an early bed. Yet still the great house on the hill blazed like a festival far into the night. Only one place in town was still awake, when its lights began to disappear—the democratic conference in the “state house.”

No one can tell what humble genius gave the place its name; yet it had become an institution of the city as familiar as its city hall. It was simply the executive chamber, where King Skeane and his councils met to plan the city's politics. You went about the corner by Bull Halloran's saloon, and turned into an old doorway. A blank-sided stairway went up on the right hand to a tenement; behind and at the left a low doorway, generally locked, passed through into the “state house”—a little, low, unpapered room, with two old black round tables, surrounded by cheap, cane-seated chairs. The place could be approached through the saloon itself, and sometimes when not occupied for more tremendous purposes, was used for the occasional patron, who preferred to take his liquor at a table.

There was serious business on to-night; only the inner council was expected. Griffin the lawyer arrived first. Bull Halloran, hearing him, came thump-

ing down the empty barroom from his office at the front, and let him in.

"How's it goin'?" he growled.

"All one way, as usual," said the black lawyer.

A sparse and moody conversation filled the time they waited for King Skeane.

Before many minutes he came, his powerful figure filling the small doorway as he stooped and entered.

"How much have they beaten Thorndike?" asked Griffin ironically.

"They say he's got the biggest majority in years," said Skeane.

"It seems as if it got worse every year," said Griffin.

"The democrats had better go out of business," Bull Halloran blurted out with an oath. He turned and went back to his office.

"He'd ought to be here pretty soon," said Skeane, pulling out his watch. They were waiting for Ash to return from a visit to old Pfaff at the brewery.

He had scarcely spoken before there was a sound of confused knocking and pushing at the door.

"That's not him," said Griffin.

Bull Halloran had come down and stuck his bullet head out of the doorway.

"What do you want?" he growled.

"Is Mat Skeane in there?" asked a thick but dignified voice.

"Well, what of it if he is?"

"I've got important business with him," said the voice, "I've got to see him."

"You can't come in. He ain't here."

"I saw him come in."

"Well, I tell you he ain't here," said the saloonkeeper, crowding the door shut.

"Who is it?" asked Skeane from the inside.

"It's old man O'Hara," said Halloran. "He's drunk."

"Let him in," said Skeane. "That's all right."

General Barrett O'Hara stalked majestically by, hurling one basilisk glance at the saloonkeeper, and stood before the council table, bombastically drunk.

"Good avening, gintlemin," he said with the bow of a cavalier.

"How're you, Barret?" grunted Skeane. "What's up?"

General Barrett O'Hara remained dramatically silent, awaiting the psychological moment.

"Gintlemin," he said at length, "you are assimbled here for the consideraytion of important quistions, no doubt. I'll not detain ye. I'm merely come to give you warnin', like a good scout to his gineril."

"What's goin' on," said the imperturbable-faced Skeane, kicking Griffin under the table.

"Conspiracee," hissed the Irish warrior, wrapping his martial cloak around him. "That's what's goin' on."

"What, another one?" asked Skeane.

"It's true this toime," responded O'Hara with dignity. He peered mysteriously about the room.

"Are ye considerin' that young Mayhew for mayor?" he asked.

"I've heard his name mentioned," said Skeane.

"You want to look out for him. He's a traitor," exclaimed General O'Hara.

"What's he done now?" said Skeane.

"He's payin' attintion to Thorndike's daughter."

"Is he?"

"He is. He'd like to marry her."

"Be God, Barrett, so would I," said Skeane, the quizzical wrinkles gathering about his eyes. "And so would you, you old divil, you."

"That's all right, Mat Skeane, but there's more behind this."

"There is?"

"There is. It's treacheree. Ah-ha," said the meaningful O'Hara, "I've watched, I've followed 'em. You know what I told you the other time."

"It's suspicious," said Skeane.

"It is. It's more; it's outrageous. 'Tis a plan of thim two, this Mayhew and the great divil Thorndike. They'll elect him mayor, and he'll break up the dimicratic party. Thin he'll marry the girl and old Thorndike'll take him into partnership. That's what they're planning to do."

"It sounds like a fairy tale," said Mat Skeane.

"It's too good to be true."

"It's facts," said Barrett O'Hara.

"How do you know it?" asked Skeane.

"I've stoodied thim," said General O'Hara pompously, "Ye want to look into that, Mat Skeane."

King Skeane was losing his interest. "I will," he said shortly.

"You will?"

"Yes," grunted Skeane, turning to talk to Griffin.

The old man was just rising to the statement of his discoveries. He steadied himself by the edge of the table, as he launched into superheated invective.

"Let there be no ambigooty on my manin'. Mat Skeane," he cried. "Look out for him, watch him ivry minute. He's a deep one for his years; he's a black-hearted traitor. He'll be the roonation of the dimicratic party in this town. Has he been workin' shoulder to shoulder with the rist of us, durin' the campaign just arrivin' at its disasterous ind? He has not; he's been coortin' this girl—When my own case was before the aldermen, where was he? He was late; he deserted me, be God, at the crisis of evints; he stayed out with a purpose, and me usin' me inflooence ivrywhere loike for me own son to build up his practice, to its present prosperitee."

He was reaching the real gist of the matter now, and his emotions and eloquence increased as the square of the distance. The two other men had their backs to him talking.

"I tell ye," he went on.

A knock came at the door and the expected man appeared.

"All right, Barrett," said Skeane, interrupting; "we'll look him up."

The hoary relic of old war continued his invective. "I've warned ye, Mat Skeane; I warn ye agin," he cried. "You want—"

Skeane gave a little nod to Bull Halloran.

"Ye'll have to be goin', Barrett," said the big saloon-keeper, pushing him to the door.

"I warn ye," cried the receding voice. "I warn ye." The door closed after him with a crash, and here was General Barrett O'Hara, hero of two wars, pitched head and crop into outer darkness, preening his ruffled dignity on the curbing.

Inside he of the green eyes advanced to the table, his hands deep in the pockets of his striped worsted coat, and sat down.

"What'll you have, gents—beer?" asked Halloran, lingering by the table.

"Yeh," said Skeane indifferently—answering for the party.

Halloran brought it and left the room.

"Well?" said Skeane.

"Well," said Ash, "he's got to have it."

"That settles it," said Skeane.

The black lawyer nodded, and was silent.

The three men sat for a moment without speaking—Griffin slouched down in his chair, looking out under his black hat brim; Ash tipped back, with his hat raked to one side; the big figure of King Skeane, elbows out, hands on his thighs, erect as a Chinese god on its pedestal, with his unlighted cigar stub gripped in the corner of his mouth, staring at the opposite wall.

"Just how'd he leave it?" asked Skeane.

"He's got to have a promise—cast iron—before-hand that he'll put Rafferty on the license board."

"The old fat-head," said Skeane, and went silent again.

"I found out something else down there," said Ash, leaning forward. He motioned backward with his head. "Bull Halloran—they're goin' to put a keeper on him to-morrow."

The other two men looked stolidly out through the small door behind the bar, in the melancholy cavern of the empty saloon. Stale silence filled that haunt of laughter and coarse noise. The great mirror gazed moodily into empty darkness, the immodest young women on the walls, forever hesitating at the brink of the bath leered out into unappreciative vacancy.

In his glass office, at the front end of the place, sat Bull Halloran, in a little island of light, fumbling anxiously over the leaves of his account books, with thick fingers.

"He's had a tip," said Ash.

Griffin nodded.

"Poor Bull," said Ash. "I'm sorry for him. He don't know where he stands."

"Never mind about Bull Halloran," said "King" Skeane, "We've got something else to think about."

"That's right," murmured Griffin.

"Look here," said Skeane; "You don't know what you're up against."

He paused a moment.

"The vote went against us to-day—right here in town," he said.

"What!"

"They carried it by 200 for Thorndike."

"Sufferin' God!"

The sound of the groups shuffling by on the sidewalks came down the empty saloon through their silence.

"How'd they do it?" asked Ash.

"You know what I told you last winter?" said Skeane. "They're workin' that same game."

"What, the French vote?"

"Yes."

"And reform," suggested Griffin.

"Yes, all hollerin' for reform, especially the Frenchmen."

"That's a sweet reform," said Ash scornfully.

"It works," said Skeane.

"That's what they're in politics for,—to reform the Irish," said Griffin.

"You remember what old Tim Muldoon told the big Frenchman was the meanin' of the motto on the St. Jean the Baptist flag," said Skeane; "when he asked him to read it? 'To hill with the Irish,' he says, 'that's what it rades.'"

"That's it," said Griffin.

"Now, look here," said Skeane. "They've got nine hundred—yes, and a thousand French votes in this town if they can get 'em out once. Well, then, they've got seven hundred Yankees, say, and some English. But there ain't more'n one thousand three hundred Irish votes, not to save your life; no, and not more'n one thousand five hundred democrats all told—If they get out all those Frenchmen, it's all up with us."

"What do they give 'em?" asked Ash, "anything but aldermen?"

"City physician," said Skeane, "so's one of those fat Canuck doctors can strut around City Hall with his plug hat and long coat and yellar shoes—that satisfies 'em."

"One of those Montreal dog-killers, with his little cane. I'd like to see him go down into the Patch some night," said Ash suggestively.

"Well," said Skeane, "that's the way they're doin' it; they're playin' 'em against the Irish. We've got to get out and hustle, if we want to live. They claim the democrats have lost Mill River for good. The first thing we know there won't be any democrats in the state; it'll be solid like the old days when they used to march 'em in from the mills to the polls and back again before they had the Australian ballot."

"I wasn't here then," said Ash. "Did they do what they say they did?"

"Do it, yes! They'd do it now, if they could; whole rooms of them in line like pay-day—with the overseers ahead."

"And did they tell 'em how to vote?"

"Tell 'em? What would they tell 'em for? They *knew*, didn't they? Talk about your Solid South—that was a common thing."

"Hell, yes," observed Griffin, "they did it everywhere."

"One way or another."

"Blue tickets," said Griffin, reminiscently. "Where I came from when I was a boy, the Company's tickets

were blue; you could tell 'em a mile off. If a man didn't vote a blue ticket, God help him."

"No intimidation, mind you; nothing wrong. He'd just lose his job," said Skeane. "You know how it is now, if a man gets too gay in local politics. The work runs short all of a sudden—that's a way it has."

"Sure."

"O, they don't need any guardian," said Skeane.

"Not when Thorndike's around," added Ash.

The conversation had run down into silence.

"King" Skeane led it back again to the vital point.

"Now here," he said, "this is business. We want to understand just where we are. We got beaten last year; we got beaten to-day. We've got the fight of our lives on, if we're goin' to beat next month."

The two other men gave serious assent.

"There's just one man we can win with," said Skeane, thumping the table with his thick forefinger until it buckled backward at the first joint.

"Mayhew?"

"That's the man—young Mayhew."

His voice seemed almost angry in its seriousness.

"What about Fenton; the old man thought may be you could take him."

"Fenton; he'd be a pretty thing!"

"With the other fellows cryin' reform!" said Griffin.

"What'd be the first thing they'd say about him?"

The question went unanswered.

"No," said Skeane, "you can't elect one side of him.

"You don't want an Irishman anyway," he continued. "You want a Yankee—a good, clean, young Yank, that'll take their own votes from 'em."

"You've got it," said Ash.

"What did that old fat-head mix into it for?" said Skeane angrily. "We had it goin' all right. And now *he* comes and's got to have his iron bound promise in advance and knock it all over."

"He's always had it," suggested Ash.

"Yes, but this man's different. He'll balk."

"The old man can't see it."

"No," said Skeane, with an oath, "he thinks they're all the same price. I could have worked this feller after he was elected—for Rafferty, or somebody else, all right. But he won't stand for promises in advance."

"Well, it's done now," suggests Griffin.

"Did you tell Pfaff what I said?" asked Skeane.

"What?"

"About the People's brewery gettin' in here?"

"Yes."

"What's that?" asked Griffin.

"About their agents bein' around here already spendin' money right and left. One more vote in the board lets 'em in. It would give 'em the whole list of licenses."

"Every one of them," assented Griffin.

"They'd bust half the saloon men in town."

"That's right."

They went over the threatening situation in detail. This was no pretty parlour experiment in politics of

the little leisure league for raising the masses; this was a real political power—three crafty men, sitting far into the night in the back room of a saloon with political bankruptcy staring them in the face—devising and plotting, considering every possible method of escape.

"Well," said Griffin at last. "What are you goin' to do about it?"

"I'm goin' to see Pfaff again—first."

"You can't do anything with him," said Ash. "I tell you that, now."

"I don't believe I can myself, but I can try."

"Well, if you don't—what?" asked Griffin.

"We'll have to get the promise."

"He won't give it."

"By God," said Skeane, "he's *got* to."

"Who made his practice for him?" asked Ash.

"There's something in that," said Griffin.

"If he don't come around," said Ash, "we'll make him sick."

"We'll break him in two," said Skeane.

The conference was over.

"Well, I'll see you here to-morrow night," said Skeane, getting up. The three men called to Halloran and started for the door.

The saloonkeeper hurried down to the entrance into the barroom.

"Say, Pat," he called to Ash, "Look here. I want to speak to you."

The other two men passed along and the door closed after them.

"You was down to the brewery to-day wasn't you?" said the saloonkeeper.

"Yeh."

"Say, are they goin' to put a keeper on me?" he asked anxiously.

"I don't know," lied Ash. "He didn't say anything to me about it."

"They'd tell you about it, wouldn't they?"

"No."

"Well, I heard they was," persisted the saloonkeeper.

"If they did," said Ash, "it would be only to take care of themselves against the other feller."

"That's a damned nice way to treat a man," complained Halloran.

No answer from Ash.

"I wouldn't care," said the big man, staring back into the dark. "It's the wife and the children, I'm thinkin' of."

"Ah, drop it Bull," said Ash, with rough sympathy. "The company'll take care of you."

"Say," said the saloonkeeper, suddenly. "Is Skeane goin' to carry the town this fall?"

"I hope so."

"He'd better."

"If he don't," said Ash confidentially, "it'll bust him."

"Yes," said the saloonkeeper, with an oath, "and all the rest of us."

"Well, good night, Bull."

"Good night, Pat."

The last guest was gone. The big saloonkeeper turned slowly back to his office; and began heavily thumbing over his old books again, in stupid bewilderment.

Chapter XX

THE RICHARD PLIMSOLL

THE front door had closed for the last time, and William Thorndike had returned to his study with his half finished cigar. A yellow heap of telegrams on the dark centre-desk—news and congratulations from a hundred men—spilled over upon the floor. A velvet silence filled the high rooms, against which the faintest sound stood out in bold relief, the voices of the house, unheeded in the daylight—the cry of the wind at a corner, the clatter of a window blind, the creaking of a floor board in the unceasing fight against the old relentless drag of time and gravitation. The pulse of the black marble clock searched every corner of the place with its melancholy regularity. The Master of Ellington sat alone with the fulfilment of his life's ambition, considering it.

He had been there but a few moments when he straightened up. There was the fall of light feet on the stairway, the rustle of skirts in the silence and his daughter was standing in the doorway.

"I thought you were in bed, Ruth, long ago," said Thorndike.

"No."

The girl moved forward and sat down across the desk from him.

"I want to talk with you," she said.

"It must be important," said Thorndike frowning.

"It is.

"I haven't troubled you during the election," she said, "you had enough. But now I must know."

"Know what?"

"That thing you've been keeping from me."

Thorndike looked up sharply.

"About that man who came here nights."

"Don't worry about that, Ruth," he answered.

"That's all settled now."

"But I want to know myself. What had it to do with the *Richard Plimsoll*?"

"What do you know about the *Richard Plimsoll*?" he said quickly.

"Not very much," she said quietly, "but you are going to tell me."

"I'm not very good at telling stories," he said dryly.

"I'm no longer a child, Dad," she persisted. "I'm a woman. You owe it to me to tell me. O, if you only knew how many nights I have been kept awake by it," she cried, "you wouldn't refuse me."

"All right," said Thorndike, "I'll tell you."

"Everything," she stipulated.

"Everything."

She settled down to listen to him—her bright eyes on his face; her chin in her palms, her elbows deep in the piles of telegrams on the desk. A sad little memory came to him as he saw her, a regretful sense

of the lapse of time. How often he had watched her there, buried in her school books—his merry, earnest little high-spirited girl—the one human tie of his life.

"There isn't much to tell," began Thorndike slowly. "It was about the company during the Civil War—principally, and about a business fight of mine with old Mayhew. He tried to ruin me."

"Yes?" prompted the girl.

"He didn't do it."

"And Mayhew?"

"He started it," said Thorndike laconically.

"I've told you before how I began business," he went on. "There was \$10,000 which your grandfather left me. Old Mayhew got me to put it in the company. It was a small mill then—capitalised at \$25,000. Mayhew held the other \$15,000 himself. So he had the mill, the management of it, just as he did before, and my \$10,000 thrown in. I was pretty young then!

"We had a good business, though, for a small mill. We seemed to be doing well. Then the Civil War came on.

"The trouble with us was," he continued, reflectively, "we were all too hungry, those days. They were all the same—the manufacturers, I mean. They wanted to do it all at once. Fifty per cent. wasn't enough; they'd got to have one hundred—especially old Mayhew. You don't remember him?"

The girl shook her head.

"No, he died when you were a baby. The dry-

faced, old devil. He was a monomaniac on money; he wasn't flesh; he was brown leather—body and soul—to the core.

"We had a good business before the war in the South; for some reason they got trading with us; sometimes they'd come up here for goods. After it started, that trade kept right on. '*I didn't make this war,*' old Mayhew used to say.

"It was no great trouble shipping goods at first—even after the blockade. When the war broke out, the United States navy was falling to pieces. The English built those fast steamers and ran them into Charleston. Those old tubs of the government had no more chance with them than a wheelbarrow with a locomotive. We used to ship goods to England (for the looks of the thing); then they went into the Bahamas, and then to Charleston. We sold to the United States government, too, army contracts. We were playing on both sides. These are the plain facts in the case; Seth Mayhew saw to that, mostly."

He looked up. The girl's face was flaming.

"And you?" she asked.

"What do you mean?"

"What did you do about it?"

"I went with the one hundred per cent.," said he, dryly.

"So that was what those men knew," she said, steadying her voice, "that—"

She hesitated.

"That we ran the blockade?"

"Yes."

"It would not have sounded very pretty in a campaign."

"*Pretty!*" said the girl.

"Was that all they knew?" she persisted coldly.

"No, there was something else."

"What was it?"

"Mayhew married the business. I was down around Washington and the armies looking out for contracts. We made a good deal of money; we should have made a good deal more if Mayhew hadn't been so greedy and had so many goods thrown out for being under specifications.

"In the winter of 1864 Mayhew sent for me at Washington, to come home on important business. I was anxious to come. I had been getting some notions one way or other about the company I didn't like. Fifteen minutes afterwards I was coming north.

"I got here the day before he expected me—on the evening train. It was cold and late and there was nobody I knew at the station. Instead of going home, I pulled up the collar of my ulster, went to the office of the mill, let myself in with my private key, and looked over the company's books.

"I had had some suspicions, but nothing like that. That company didn't own the office sign, and I myself wasn't worth so much as a girl in the weave room. He'd sucked the thing dry as an old lemon."

The manufacturer gave a little laugh of grim reminiscence.

"What an old devil he was," he went on. "He'd

been in contracts for himself, and he had the whole fanciering of the mill. He had everything in his own hands and he'd mixed things up so nobody could straighten them out,—only the profits always seemed to come to him personally, and the losses on the company.

"I didn't go home at all that night, I stayed with those books. I'd come back thinkin' I was a rich man, as things were then; instead of that I was bankrupt. The more I saw the worse it was. The old spider had me wound round and round, till I couldn't see any possible way out of it. I could sue him, of course, but ten to one I couldn't get anything if I did, and besides I wouldn't have any money to sue with; I was ruined.

"In the morning I closed up and went over to the hotel and got a cup of coffee. I'd make up my mind to one thing. There'd got to be a crisis pretty quick. He was going to do something; he'd got to. All I could do was to lie still and wait and see what the game was.

"After the morning train came in I went over from the hotel to the office. He was waiting for me. I never saw him so unctuous; he was butter from head to foot.

"‘My dear young man,’ he said, ‘you came at once; with your usual enterprise.’

"We went into the side office. For half an hour he sat, and squinted and grinned at me, and talked round and round and lied about the business. It had been unusually good—according to him.

“ ‘I want to congratulate you, Thorndike,’ he said, ‘you are going to be a rich man.’

“ ‘Finally he sidled up to it. ‘I sent for you, Thorndike,’ he said, putting his hand on my knee, ‘on something very important.

“ ‘We’ve made another shipment to Charleston.’

“ ‘I nodded.

“ ‘A very important one. There’s something,’ he said looking around, ‘besides cotton cloth.’

“ ‘Guns?’ I said.”

“ ‘Guns! For the rebels?’” echoed the girl, her face stone white.

The manufacturer looked at her a moment in protest of the interruption and went on, as if she had not spoken.

“ ‘Some,’ he said, ‘and there are some cartridges and percussion caps. They’re very high down there,’ he said clutching at my knee again. ‘They’ll pay \$250,000 for what there is there. Half of it’s profit.’

“ ‘Who’ll pay,’ I said.

“ ‘The Confederate government!’ he said, talking into my face, ‘In gold.’

“ ‘I turned away from him; his breath wasn’t exactly pleasant.

“ ‘Well,’ I said. He made me sick all over. ‘What do you want of me?’

“ ‘You’ve got to go down there,’ he said catching at my clothes again.

“ ‘It’s pretty dangerous business,’ I said.

“ ‘That’s it,’ he said, ‘exactly.’

" 'Why not have the steamer people do it themselves?' I asked.

" 'I can't trust 'em,' he wailed, 'I can't trust 'em.' That was true; he couldn't trust anybody.

" 'You must go, Thorndike,' he said fawning; 'with your courage and enterprise you'll put it through.'

" 'And what if I'm caught!' I said, half to try him.

" 'You won't be,' he said.

" 'No, I won't,' I answered.

" 'You'll go?' he said, quivering all over."

" 'You didn't go!' the girl broke in,

The man stopped. "Are you going to let me go on?" he said coolly. The girl was silent. He continued where he had left off:

" 'Yes,' I said, 'I'll go.'

"He thanked me for ten minutes.

"Then he outlined the scheme to me. The goods were already shipped. All I had to do was to see that the sale was made right, put the money in the ship again, and come back—not on the steamer, that would be taking too much risk, he said, but the way I went.

" 'You've got to hurry,' he said.

" 'I'll go this afternoon,' I told him. 'And now I'm going over to see my wife.'

"I never shook hands with him with so much pleasure in my life. I saw a way out of the thing. If I only laid my hands on that money once—it would be his time to worry.

"I went over to the house and saw your mother—two hours. She never forgave me the length of that visit, I think. In the afternoon I went South again.

"I got through the lines all right. We had our ways. It wasn't so hard when you knew how. And I'd done it before. But it took time. A week after I reached Charleston, the goods came in all right. I sold them and took the money. The captain of the boat came to see me about taking it out again according to his orders.

" 'No,' I said, 'we've changed our minds.'

"I took the money that night and started North with it. I reached New York with it finally and put it all in a bank. Then I started through to Ellington on the next train.

"Everything was in my hands, you see. Whoever had that money, had it, if he wanted to keep it. The other one wouldn't make any outcry about money made in that way; he couldn't. I didn't know just what the old man's game was, but it was on that principle, I knew. But I'd made up my mind to one thing, long ago. He'd nearly driven me crazy with the thing the past month; he'd have ruined me and your mother with a smirk—he'd been at it for months. I said to myself I'd give him one more chance. If he played the game through, I would—without a quiver.

"I reached Ellington on the evening train, and came right up here. He didn't expect me so soon, I knew; but somehow he'd got word I was coming. The train was late; it was well through the evening. No one else was downstairs in the house, when the girl let me in the front door. I came right into this room here. He sat there at his desk, where you are now—a little back," said the manufacturer, pointing:

The girl turned her head impulsively. It seemed as if another presence could be felt in the room.

"The very first time he opened his mouth was to lie," the man went on.

"'Have you heard the news?' he said, coming toward me, and catching my coat by the lapel. His face was flushed, his necktie at one side, his vest half unbuttoned. He was acting the thing down to the ground.

"'The *Richard Plimsoll* has gone down; they've destroyed her.'

So that was his game.

"'I know it,' I said.

"That was all; I had him in his own trap.

"He had an old desk chair where he always sat; a high-backed thing—with red velvet upholstery. He sort of fell back into it; his face was green, all of a sudden. I could hear his fingers crunching into a paper he had in the right hand—some forgery or other he was going to read his news from. Then he dropped it on the floor.

"'You—you *heard* it?' he said.

"'Yes.'

"'Where?'

"'On the way up.'

"'How'd it happen?' he stammered.

"'They caught them going out, somewhere outside the harbour. And sunk them—all hands, they say. She took them with her, like blind kittens in a basket.' I told him the story in detail; you don't know what you can do at lying till you have to.

"He sat perfectly still, only for his eyes, and his right hand. He had a little hand, with a little stem of a wrist, all hairy, in one of these big, old-fashioned white cuffs. It ran in and out and in and out that cuff for all the world like a rat at the mouth of a hole, moving here and there on the table in front of him, nibbling at the edges of papers, anything that happened to be lying there loose. He made me nervous. I hadn't slept for a week; I must have looked like a lunatic myself.

" 'What—what are we going to do?' he said. He'd begun foolin' then with that old seal there in front of you; that first steal of the Mayhew mills. It's always been kept here for some reason.

" 'Do?' I said. 'We'll take our loss and go on just as usual, I suppose.'

" 'We can't go on.'

" 'Can't?' I said. 'What do you mean?'

" 'We can't meet our notes,' he said.

" 'Notes!' I said. 'What notes?'

" 'To send out this shipment.'

" 'Look here,' I said, 'you told me we were safe either way no matter what happened!'

"He didn't answer; he kept sliding down into the big chair.

" 'Do you mean to say you've ruined us on this thing?'

" 'Yes,' he whispered.

" 'Then,' I said, 'I'll get my share of it out of you some way!'

" 'You can't,' he said, '*I'm* ruined.'

"That was about the first time he had told the truth that night.

" 'We'll see about that,' I said.

"When I went out he still sat there in that stiff backed chair—a little man in a heap, with his head forward, looking straight out at the wall, and his right hand still going, like a rat, nibbling away at the edges of the papers."

Thorndike stopped a moment.

"He got hold of the wrong man that time," he said in a hard voice, and stopped again.

"Then what happened?" asked the girl.

"What do you mean?"

"He died, didn't he?"

"Yes, three months later."

"Did he ever understand?"

"He did at last, of course—when he had that stroke. He may have suspected me before, I don't know. I don't believe so, quite. He was looking for a letter from his agents, I know that. But things went slowly those days. Besides, there was nothing for them to write; they had delivered their goods. There wasn't any more writing about such things than necessary. And then—"

He stopped.

"And then—?" said the girl.

"Then one day the *Richard Plimsoll* was caught. There was a little paragraph in the *New York Herald* about it, 'way down in one corner. We got our papers late those days; very often we didn't read them till the next morning. He got up one morning and sat

reading the paper when his eye fell on that thing, I suppose. He jumped up out of his chair, called out '*Richard Plimsoll*,' and fell back, paralyzed. He never spoke again."

"O," cried Ruth Thorndike, in a voice of pain.

The clock pulsed on through their silence.

"He understood," she went on at last.

"Yes, she was captured a month later than I said—going *into* the harbour."

"And these men," asked the girl, "how did they know it?"

"I had to have help bringing that money North," said Thorndike. "The man who helped me was the father of that red-haired scoundrel. He didn't *know* anything; but he could guess. Those two got their start from him. Then they went to work themselves. They worked up that case like lawyers."

"Did they have actual proof?"

"O, they had *proof* enough," said Thorndike.

"And now?"

"O, it's all right now. I've got their proof, and one of them, the only one that's dangerous, I've bought off."

"And the other one?"

"I've got him where I want him. I could send him to state's prison to-morrow. And I will, too, very likely.

"O, don't worry about that, Ruth," he said smiling at her, "at the worst there was no legal action that would stand against me. That was outlawed years ago. And now the whole thing is done."

Her eyes repelled him. "And the money?" she asked relentlessly, "the \$250,000?"

"No one could touch that either," he said misunderstanding her. "The government would have confiscated those goods if they'd captured them, but there's no law by which they could reach that money now. They haven't the ghost of a claim on it; I doubt if I could *give* it to them!"

"What did you *do* with it?" she persisted.

"What would I do with it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"I kept it; it was mine, wasn't it?"

"I don't see how it was."

"Whose was it then? It certainly wasn't Mayhew's. That was the game, wasn't it? His game, not mine; but when he forced it, I went through it, to the end. What did you think we were playing for, exercise?"

"I didn't know."

"It's perfectly simple. It was dog eat dog. He tried to freeze me out; I froze him. And when he was out, he was out. That's business. You don't understand it, that's all."

"I'm glad I don't," said the girl scornfully, "if that's business."

She hid her face in her hands a moment; then threw back her head with a quick rebellious movement.

"O, the humiliation of it," she said bitterly. "To think you got your money like that."

"You would have preferred to have Seth Mayhew ruin me, I suppose," said the manufacturer.

"Seth Mayhew," said the girl, "I hadn't even

thought of him!" The conscience of the woman went directly to the mark; past the sordid quarrel for the plunder to the dishonour of the main deed itself. "It was bad enough—what you did to him. But what was that compared to the thing you both were doing; to that—that selling of the guns."

"*You* certainly have reason to complain; under the circumstances," said the manufacturer.

"I certainly have," said the girl.

"Where would you have been, if things hadn't happened exactly as they did; selling ribbons very likely in some store."

"I'd rather be," she said defiantly.

"Don't be hysterical," said Thorndike.

"What does a woman know of the way men's business is conducted? Take any of the successful mills about here—Carnochan's or Black's—do you suppose their histories would read very well at a five o'clock tea? They wouldn't, I can tell you that. I know them from start to finish. They'd shock the young ladies' ideals. And it's lucky they would. They are run by grown men, with the power to meet the force of circumstances, instead of sitting down to let it jam them to the wall."

"There must be some difference in degree, at least," the girl said, bitterly. "They couldn't *all* of them have put a price on their country in the time of a great war."

Both sat silent for a moment, till her grief and shame flashed forth again.

"O, what must he think of us and our money?" she cried, involuntarily.

"Who?"

"John Mayhew."

"What does he know about it?"

"A good deal. I know that now from things he has said."

"Then what has kept him still?"

"I have."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"Is he in love with you?"

The girl was silent.

"Has he asked you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"You refused him, of course."

"Of course; why of course? Why should I refuse him? His family has been as much or more than ours has. He is educated, isn't he, intelligent, honest and brave? He's come back here and started life over again; hasn't he done well considering his changes? Hasn't he the respect of everyone in town? What have you against him?"

"He needs a little common sense," said Thorndike, "for one thing."

"You mean he doesn't agree with you in politics," said the girl. "I want to ask you—did you do what they say; did you threaten to drive him from town?"

"I told him some *facts*," said Thorndike.

"Then you did do that," said the girl angrily; "you did threaten him?"

"Wasn't it enough," she cried bitterly (O, how

many times she has regretted that speech since), "Wasn't it enough to kill one man, and take his money, without keeping his family from earning an honest living?"

"You've gone about far enough," said Thorndike.

"No, I have not," she said. "There's one question more I'm going to ask. What are you going to do about it?"

"About what?"

"About that money."

"What would you suggest?" asked the manufacturer sarcastically. "We might get the vile stuff in ten dollar bills and take it out in the road and burn it; or we might found an orphan asylum with it, one or the other. Either would be practical from a woman's standpoint."

"I can suggest something more practical than that," retorted the girl. "Half of that money doesn't belong to you—even to burn or give away to salve your conscience. You stole it; it belonged to Seth Mayhew and it belongs now to his son."

"Give it to him—that dirty money to that immaculate youth," sneered the man; "what would he do with it?"

"That's not *your* responsibility," said the girl.

Thorndike preserved an angry silence.

"Will you give him his share of that money?"

"No," said the man roundly, "I will not."

"You mean that you refuse to do even that?"

"Yes, absolutely."

"A noble end to a great enterprise," she said scornfully. "I'm *proud* of you."

"I advise you to drop this thing, Ruth," said Thorn-dike, "now!"

"Never, never, not until it is made right, as far as it can be."

"You'll get over this," said the man. She did not answer.

"I want to ask you something," he said. "Did you refuse John Mayhew?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"For your sake—because I would not leave you."

"Was that all?"

"Yes."

"Ruth," he said, "are you in love with him?"

"Yes," she said, defiantly, rising from her chair. "I am."

She started to leave the room.

"This is enough," she said, "for one night."

Never before in the history of her life had she left him without kissing him good night.

She stopped a moment as she came to the outer door.

"O, Dad," she said, and went sobbing up the stairs. He understood from that one heartbroken little cry, how utterly her ideals of himself, enshrined her life-time in her girlish heart, had been destroyed.

The man looked up heavily at the clock. It was nearly two. He threw his dead cigar into the grate,

and got up. As his eye fell upon the pile of telegrams upon the desk he smiled grimly. Such a delightful day this had been—this day of his victory. Then he reached forward and turned out the light. The old room had been through the second act of its drama.

Chapter XXI

THROWN DOWN

A BUGGY drew up in the dark side street, and Herman Pfaff, the brewer, slowly and painfully descended to the curbing. The tortured buggy springs rocked back again, the driver drove along, and Hermann Pfaff, stepping sideways up the little threshold, came wheezing and puffing in through the small door of the state house."

"Goot efening, gentlemen," he gasped.

"Good evening," said Skeane and Halloran.

The monstrous form lowered itself carefully and sat quivering and leering in vast discomfort on a little chair.

"Fine veather ve're havin'," it remarked.

"Great," said Halloran.

"Ven is he gomin'?" asked the brewer of Skeane.

"I ain't been able to get him yet," answered Skeane, "he's been out all day."

"Ah," said Pfaff.

"I'm goin' out now to find him," said Skeane. "I thought I'd wait and see you first."

"Very goot."

"I'll be back before a great while."

"All raight. Ve'll find amusement for ourselves, von't ve, Mr. Halloran?"

"Sure," said Halloran, with evident embarrassment. He was thinking of the little man in the front room occupying his desk in his glass office—the keeper. There was something strange, almost pathetic, in the fear and deference of this great burly man for the object in the chair.

Skeane straightened up his hat and went out on the street. The two were alone in the sordid room; the man and his owner, the ogre and the slave.

They heard for a moment through the partitions the hoarse jests and the shuffle of heavy shoes in the barroom beyond.

"Vell, how goes it?" said the Ogre conversationally.

"O, all right; only that," said the saloonkeeper, motioning with his head to the front room.

"Say," he went on awkwardly, "I wanted to talk with you about that. What are you goin' to do with me?"

"Do? Why, ve von't do nothin', Mr. Halloran."

"You've got to do somethin'."

"O, now don't you worry about that, my good Mr. Halloran," said the Ogre soothingly; "that's all right. Joost a mee-er formalitee, that's all—for the benefit of my directors."

Bull Halloran was silent.

"They vas gettin' anxious about the elegtion—some of them, that's all. So I had to do it. After that it vill be all raight. Ve'll tage up your notes as usual."

"But supposin' the election goes against us?"

"Ah, that would be bad. But it von't. Don't worry; it von't. Ve're here to-night to figs it all up."

King Skeane walking up the street from the "state house," had found John Mayhew in his office.

"Where *were* yeh all day," he asked gruffly.

"Out of town," said Mayhew.

"I was lookin' for you," explained Skeane.

"Were you?"

"I want you to come over a little while and talk politics. I got a man here I want you to meet."

Mayhew had been approached of course about standing for the mayoralty. He had never been asked before, however, to a set conference in the "state house." He had often wondered whether he should accept such an invitation. But to-night he did not hesitate.

"All right," he said promptly.

There was a crisis in his affairs. He did not know, but he had a keen suspicion of what the invitation meant. His future rested in these men's hands. Without them in all human probability he could never be nominated; certainly never elected. Yet if they expected pledges from him which he could not give, the earlier and clearer his understanding with them the better. He accepted with secret qualms the fat domestic cigar Skeane offered him and the two started back together.

Two minutes later they were in the "state house."

Hermann Pfaff, having heard them outside, stood waiting for them with an expectant smile, like a great

trained bear on his hind legs. Skeane went through the tremendous solemnity of an introduction.

"I want you to meet my friend Mr. Mayhew, Mr. Pfaff."

John Mayhew was disconcerted; he had expected to meet the politicians here, but not this man. Mr. Pfaff's warmth, however, gave small time for reflection.

"'Appy to meet yeh, Mr. Mayhew," gasped the Ogre, leering most ingratiatingly, and extending a damp, warm, doughlike hand.

"Zit raight down and mage yourself at home.

"What are you goin' to haf?" he went on.

"O, I don't believe I care for anything," said Mayhew, with some embarrassment.

"Ah, but you moost—something," said the brewer.

"Purity Beer," suggested Skeane.

"Very goot. Would you laike that?" asked Pfaff of Mayhew, with great concern.

"Yes, certainly."

"Gif us Burity Beer," said the brewer to Halloran.

"And draw it raight.

"You moost haf it drawn raight, half the time they spoils it," he continued, with the assurance of the final authority on the subject.

"Very goot," he said critically, as the beer was brought in.

"Vell, here's luck." He poured a great draught into his huge carcass.

"Vell, how's Ellington?" said Pfaff, finishing.

"O, all right."

"And how's business?"

"O, pretty fair."

"You aind been practicing very long, haf you?"

"About a year and a half."

"So? Is that all. I thought it moost be more."

"I vant to gongratulate you, Mr. Mayhew," he went on, with heavy solemnity. "You have done remargable for such a young man."

"O, I don't know," said Mayhew awkwardly.

"Vell, I know. I've heert all about it," said the Ogre, parting his deep, shiny lips in a smile. "Ven a young man lige you is the von candidate for mayor in the democratic party in a town lige this, he is preddy remargable."

"I'm not a candidate yet," said Mayhew.

"O, yes you are."

"And the best of it is—it's thru your merid—you haf been always glean."

"Glean politigs—that's vat ve need in this country," said the Ogre with deep conviction.

He paused a moment after these high sentiments. Suddenly a terrible and unsettling yell—the blast of the French Canadian band—grunting, squealing, muttering, pounding, on fourteen warring tones and half tones, came through a partly opened window, as though some one had all at once set ajar the portal to the regions of damned torments. They were practicing "The Star Spangled Banner" in their rooms across the side street for the festival of to-morrow night—the celebration by the people of the town of Thorn-dike's victory. You could see from the window the

bandmaster in his shirt sleeves leading in sweet, oblivious self-complacency the ragged procession of sound to its awful end.

Skeane rose and shut the window with an oath.

"Now," said the brewer, advancing with great caution. "Ve've got a little madder ve'd lige to talg over with you, and get your opinion on."

"I see," said Mayhew uncompromisingly.

"I hope you von't thing offence at vat I say," proceeded Pfaff. It's bedder to talg these things open—aind it; to gome to some understanding?"

"Yes, I think it is."

"Eggsactly," said Pfaff, touching bottom again. "Vat I wanted to speeg aboud was joost this liddle madder of the license board."

Mayhew looked uncomfortable.

"Ve wanted to gonsult you about it, you understand?" said Pfaff hurriedly. "You see how it is with us. Ve want to do the best thing for the beoble—joost as you do; and at the same time, ve moost loog out for ourselves and our friends. You see? That's business."

Skeane nodded.

"All ve say is this: Here's all those men in the saloon business in Ellington. They've gone and put their money in it—joost lige any business. It ain't no different. Now, vhy aind they got joost as good a raight to keep their business as any man—joost as long as they do raight, I mean."

"They have," growled Skeane.

"Very vell. You know what a changche would mean

for all these men; if they got a new license board that threw them all out, without mercy—heartless. It would ruin them—you know that—most all of these men, and ve would suffer, too, of course. For ve stand back of them—a goot many of them.”

“Yes, I know,” said Mayhew, waiting.

“Now, vhat ve would lige to ask you, Mr. Mayhew,” said Pfaff with the deepest deference; “is, if you did not think ve could agree upon some man for that place—an honest man, who would do the raight thing—for the city—everybody; and at the same time would be able to consider the things—joost as they are, and be villing to do joostice to the men who haf licenses now.”

“I don’t know about that,” said Mayhew.

“Ve’ve got a man,” Pfaff pressed on, “who ve thing is joost the one. He’d mage a goot man—for everybody.”

“The best man in this town,” burst out Skeane.

“Who is it?” asked Mayhew.

“His name is Thomas J. Rafferty,” said Pfaff, earnestly.

“Rafferty—‘Tommy’ Rafferty!” So it was to this that all this solemn farce had been tending.

“You don’t lige him?” asked the brewer anxiously.

“No, not particularly,” said Mayhew coldly.

“Why not,” demanded Skeane.

“O, I don’t know.”

“You ain’t thinkin’ of the ward seven ballot business, are you? They proved that wasn’t so.”

“No, I wasn’t especially. I don’t want to pledge myself to any body.”

"Vell, ve'll gif you plendy of time to thing it over," said Pfaff.

"O, I don't want any more time," said Mayhew coldly.

"I 'spose you want to be nominated," said Skeane suggestively.

"Yes. But not so bad as that."

"So bad as what? I don't see anything particularly bad in giving one pledge to your friends."

"Well, I do," said Mayhew, "and you know I do—especially in this matter."

"You're pretty nice, ain't you? It's a pity about you." Bull Halloran, incapable of further restraint, had projected himself into the conversation from the barroom.

"You shut up," said Skeane angrily.

"O, gome, gome, gentlemen," said Pfaff, anxiously alert on the outside border of the discussion, "let us haf harmony. Ve are here in a perfectly simble madder—to agree on somebody that vill suit both pardies. Ve haf named one man—Mr. Mayhew does not lige him. He has his perfect raight. Very vell then, maybe he has anodder gandidate. If you haf let us hear his name—please."

"I haven't," said Mayhew.

"Very vell then, why not taige our man?" pleaded Mr. Pfaff logically.

"Because I don't want to take anybody."

"Look here," said Skeane. "Don't let's get excited. Let's look at this thing like grown men. Now you're the natural candidate for mayor—that's all right."

You're our man for the place; we want to see you elected. But you aren't the only party interested. There's our friends—and your friends, for that matter, when it comes to countin' the votes—that's got their money in this thing; that's got more to lose than anybody. Well, all we ask is that they get protection. We want you to keep on their licenses, that's all, and only when they deserve them. If they break over, that's their own lookout. What we want is just one member of the license board. We don't want to interfere with anything else. You can make the law just as stiff as you want to. And I tell you one thing, if you want to be stiff and you just say so, this town will see a stricter liquor law than it ever dreamed of before. We can promise you that."

He stopped; the wail of the French band again occupied the silence.

"Well?"

"Can't you bromise us something, please?" begged Pfaff.

"No, gentlemen," said Mayhew, "I cannot."

Skeane began again in another strain—crisp and clear and to the point.

"Now here," he said, "this is business. There's two of us wants something. You want to be mayor—and it's quite an honour for a young feller like you, at that. We want our man on the board. Say you're elected. We can't get him without you. But you can't get *elected*—nor nominated, not without us."

"Very likely I can't," said Mayhew.

"All right, then. Use your own common sense

about it. We ain't askin' you to commit any state's prison offence.

"Besides," he said after a slight pause, "You owe us something."

"I don't owe you anything," said Mayhew angrily. "I don't propose to."

"Don't owe us anything!" burst out Bull Halloran. "Damn you, we *made* you."

"You half taken our business," said the Ogre.

"Two little attachment cases."

"Of us and our friends," prompted Skeane.

"I don't see it."

"Well, I do. I built up half your practice for you, whether you knew it or not.

"And when it comes down to that," Skeane went on with a rising voice, "I can take it away."

"You can try," said Mayhew.

"Yes, and I will, if you don't come into this thing," said Skeane. "I'll bust you wide open."

"You go ahead and bust," said Mayhew.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the distressed brewer. "Vait, vait, galm yourselves. Ve moost haf an understanding; ve moost arrangche this thing."

"No, we won't. I'm through," said Mayhew getting up.

The rest all sprang up with him.

"Yes," said Skeane, with an angry understanding of the futility of carrying the thing further. "He's through. He's like the rest of 'em. They're all the same style—sit around and talk high, while somebody else does the work. And then when the time comes,

step in and take all there is in it. They call that reform."

Mayhew started to go out.

"The kind of democrats that do their work out riding with the daughter of the republican candidate for governor during the state campaign—tryin' to mix up with something real stylish."

Mayhew came back to the speaker, a deep flush on his cheeks.

"Drop that," he said, staring him in the eyes.

The three men stood in a half circle silent about this angry, self-reliant young man, with the steady eyes and the straight drawn mouth. Skeane did not go on with the line of speech he had begun. A quiet ugliness of purpose in the face opposite dissuaded him. Mayhew broke the silence first himself.

"Now," he went on, "I'm out. I'm through with the whole filthy business. You can nominate whom you please. You've 'busted' me, all right. How about yourselves?"

Three faces craned forward toward him, full of bestial hate—the wolf, the great swine, the bull-dog—glaring at him. Could anything in the world be more clearly animal than those three?

"Good night," he said, and went out forever from the atmosphere of stale smoke and beer and small political intrigue, into the clear air of outdoors.

As he passed up the main street he heard the Father Matthew drum corps marching, practicing for tomorrow night, squealing its own tune, "Old Dan Tucker," over and over again—up and down the street,

the drum major, conscious of his own rectitude, proudly leading the familiar strain about, until it permeated every nook and corner of the place. The town was alive with preparation for the coming festival.

He walked hastily on toward his office. At the entrance to the block he paused. A solitary human voice cried out through the empty, silent stairway, black as the doorway of the tomb.

"From the rolling waters of the Caasco," it resounded "to the sunset portals of the Golden Gayte, where the god of day in gorgeous state descending, begins anew his circumambyint orbit of the earth—your name, sor, is in the mouths of min to-day."

It was Brian Haitch Twohig, spokesman of the Father Matthew society, rehearsing in the dark his speech of congratulation to Mr. Thorndike.

John Mayhew stood for a moment, listening, then crept up the stairs into his office—as the orator sent forth again the roaring periods of his speech.

Thorndike, Thorndike, Thorndike—could he never be out of hearing of that name? He went over the whole thing again; his disappointments; the state of society as he found it, seeing with the passionate rebellion of youth the wrongs and inconsistencies, to the disregard of the real accomplishments of civilisation, which lay all about him.

Politics, disgusting; freedom, a lie! One man ruled all this—calling, choosing, sending forth by hundreds and thousands; changing and making new commercial

laws—ruled it through the new power of industrialism—an absolutism as iron as a Babylonian king's!

"And now," commented the speaker across the hall, "the voice of the free people of this great state in eliction assembled, have called you to the high office of governor. They have given added luster to your already illustrious name."

"Beaten, beaten, beaten," John Mayhew's rebellious spirit cried to him. His plans for himself; his enthusiasm for the termination of crying injustices against the people, so plain, and staring and elementary, a fool could not dispute them. Yet here he was caught and held—helpless; on the one side the cold immobility of Thorndike; on the other the dirty self interests of Skeane and his rabble; each exploiting the population in his own way; with a difference of degree, of magnificence in the operation; but not of kind or purpose. Yet it was Thorndike against whom most his anger rose. At the bottom of it all; he was the one first responsible.

Why had he selected him for banishment? Why had the shadow of this great figure fallen across his little path,—warning him back, preventing him from the honest pursuit of his career in business and politics; barring him forever from the woman he loved. All for what cause? The mere exercise of his liberty of conscience.

If he had only been docile and reasonable. (He fell a-dreaming) had followed the natural path! First a little of the company's business, perhaps; an associate-

justiceship of the district court, a seat in the Legislature (that young republican lawyer's prerogative), a district attorneyship, maybe; then Congress perhaps. And then—perhaps—Ruth.

He turned bitterly away from the thought of it. That was over now; he saw more clearly now. For the first time the hand of the master of the place fell upon his shoulder to show him, an unwelcome guest, the door; sooner or later this thing was certain. Very well then, the sooner the better; he would go—leave it all—yes, even Ruth. This was the break in his life.

He started up to go home.

“In the hour of your triumph,” called the voice across the hall, “we bring our garlands, with pride as becomes your fellow citizens—to lay before you.”

John Mayhew stumbled down the dark stairs.

“In the hour of your triumph—” the voice repeated. He passed out into the street and heard it no longer.

Chapter XXII

TWO MEN IN A ROOM

AT seven-thirty o'clock on the evening of the town celebration, William Henry Harrison Thorndike, sitting alone in his study, looked up and saw a strange thing. The French window opening on the porch was lifted a little from the bottom for ventilation. A maimed hand—two fingers and a thumb—was thrust in out of the darkness and clasped about the lower sash. The big window slid suddenly up and Shawn Carney stood inside the room.

"You're pretty damned particular who you have to see you," he said.

He reached back, with his eyes still on Thorndike, and pushed down the window again.

"There's more ways than one of getting into a house," he continued.

"So I see," said Thorndike coolly.

"Oh, you see, do you," jeered the man. "Well now, you see, what are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to hand you over to the police," said the manufacturer's emotionless voice.

"You'll wait a little while yet," said Carney.

"I don't think so," said Thorndike, starting to get up.

"You sit down," said Carney. The master of Ellington looked up. Here was a new tone of voice to him, a new look in the eyes he met, a new situation. Two men were alone in a room—shorn of every vestige of distinction, of every artificial power with which society clothes the individual—back again to first principles, to the even plane of pure brute strength; employer and broken ex-employé, face to face, alone, without fear or favour. The quick mind of the manufacturer understood at once.

"Sit down," repeated the hoarse voice of the man, across the desk.

The other obeyed, deliberately, without excitement; not for a moment was the spirit in his less vigorous body shaken or disturbed by fear.

"I didn't come here on any damned foolishness," said Carney. "I came here to talk business."

"You'd better hurry then," said Thorndike. "There'll be someone coming in here before long."

"No, there won't," said the other, "that door's locked."

"What makes you think so?"

"I saw you lock it."

Far below, like noises in a dream, they heard the first dim sounds of the triumphal procession, forming on the main street underneath the hill. Against a background of faint confusion, rose the shrill voice of the Father Matthew drum corps—leaving the hall, no doubt, opening with its only tune,

"Tum, tum, old Dan Tucker ;

"Tum, tum, old Dan Tucker,

"Tum, tum, old Dan Tucker,

Tum, tum, tum, tum, tum."

A gleam came into the manufacturer's eyes.

"Sit down yourself," he said, "while you're here, you might as well take a chair."

"No, I'm going to stand up," said the man warily.

"Just as you please."

"I got out of jail yesterday," said Carney, fixing his cool blue eyes on him. "You're damned cunnin', but you can't keep me there forever—not on a charge of vagrancy."

Thorndike said nothing.

"I got out and I came right up here. I stopped an hour or so in Ellington lookin' for Garvin, but he wasn't there, so I came up alone."

"So you couldn't find Garvin?" said Thorndike.

"I didn't care a hoot whether I could or not. It wasn't him I was lookin' for; it was *you*."

"I'd a seen you last night," he went on suggestively. "if you hadn't had quite so much company, and I'd seen you to-day anyway, if your servant girls weren't so well posted."

"But I'm satisfied," he said insolently; "this suits me all right."

Down below the volume of faint sound increased. The shrill voice of the drum corps, broken at intervals before, now began an incessant strain,

"O clear the way for old Dan Tucker,
Tum, tum, old Dan Tucker."

The procession had started on its march.

The man seated himself lightly on the arm of a big chair. "I got you where I want you," he said, "man to man, once in your life.

"Now," he went on, "I've come up here to talk this thing over—without any funny business. We've got something you want—and you've got to have, and you've got to pay for it sooner or later. You got by the election all right. O, you're slick! But that won't make any difference. We've got some few things that'll make you sick—yet. Some things a governor of the state won't care to have brought out—not if he can help it. Now that's what we've got. What are you going to pay for it?"

"Nothing," said the manufacturer quietly.

"Look here, my friend," said Carney, leaning forward; "this is no time for bluffs."

"There's no bluff about this. You didn't see Garvin down street, did you?"

"Well, 'sposin' I didn't," said Carney suspiciously.

"Well, you won't," said the other.

The brown eyes met the blue and held them.

"There's been a number of things happened in the last month you don't seem to know about."

"Well—for instance?"

"Well, for instance, I've had a little conference with Garvin. It seems that he has forgotten about these things you are trying to talk about just now. So he

told me when he left. He said as far as he was concerned he should never remember them again. We had a very agreeable talk about it."

"You lie," said the man, with fear and anger in his voice.

"O, all right," said the manufacturer, reaching forward. "Did you ever see this," he asked, taking up a tin box from underneath a pile of papers.

"Give me that box," said Carney threateningly, rising to his feet.

"Certainly," said the manufacturer, tossing it to the other side of the desk.

It was perfectly empty.

"You didn't suppose I would *keep* those papers for anything?" he said.

The man laid the box back on the desk, muttering a black oath against his treacherous confederate.

"That's all right," he went on defiantly. "He may have sold out; but I ain't. I know a few things, myself."

"No, you don't," said Thorndike staring him in the eyes. "Not that are any use to me. If I wanted you, I'd have bought you, long ago. He was sharp, the other fellow. But you're no use whatever—you're a great awkward drunken brute without a spoonful of brains in your body. You've made a botch of this every time you touched it. I knew from the first time I got into this thing I didn't want *you*."

"That's a good game," said the man, with the muscles of his jaws working. "But it won't go. I don't want to talk to you much longer," he went on, "I'm

goin' to ask you once more—and that's all. What are you goin' to do about it?"

The manufacturer's confidence was carrying him too far.

"I'm going to put you in state's prison," he said, simply. "I was a little in doubt at first what on. That case of your stealing in the Patch was pretty clear. I might have used that. Or I might have used the blackmail—if necessary."

"Blackmail?"

"Yes, blackmail."

"You don't dare."

"Don't I? I don't know why not. I've got a good witness who's willing to turn state's evidence any time. What have *you* got?"

The man was dangerously silent.

"You've got nothing; not a paper. Not a witness; not a voice but your own. What would you amount to—a common criminal with a jail record—coming out with a cock and bull story twenty-five years old?"

He paused again.

"We could show up that scheme in good shape. That would mean quite a number of years. But that isn't necessary *now*."

"Now?"

"Now that I've caught you here," said Thorndike.

"You haven't *caught* me yet," said the man.

Thorndike looked up; a new tone was in that voice; a fierce hate burned in those deep, blue eyes. A suspicion of the real situation flashed across him.

Nearer, perceptibly nearer, came the piping of the

drum corps—irregular waves of sound, rising and falling on the stillness of the night, stopping at a corner for the column to reform; coming on again—the same old exultant refrain.

“Clear the road for old Dan Tucker,
Clear the road for old Dan Tucker.”

“That’s all you’ve got to say, is it?” asked the man, in a quiet voice.

Thorndike nodded.

“Well now, I’ve got something to tell *you*.”

Thorndike looked up at the clock; it was seven minutes of eight; by the hour they should be there.

“You want to hurry,” he said, “they’ll be here in a minute or two.”

“Don’t you fret about me,” sneered Carney.

“What I was goin’ to tell you,” he went on, “was about myself, and I want you to pay attention to it. I began here as a boy in your mill; I wasn’t the best boy that ever lived; and I wasn’t the worst. I got a job early as helper in the machine shop—four dollars a week; then I learned the machinist’s trade. I could play ball some, so that I got a job now and then in the summer at that; winters I kept workin’ in the machine shop.

“Then I got this,” extending his mutilated hand; “and I had to quit the ball playin’, and get into the shop regular. I was a good workman—you can ask any of them—except that old wooden Indian, Allen. I was gettin’ my three dollars and a half a day, and I earned it. I got promised to a girl—there ain’t no

better or whiter girl in the country to-day. I'd like to meet the man who said there was." He paused.

"And then one day you came along—and you caught me doin' somethin' you didn't know the least damn thing about—and you fired me—on the say-so of a liar, without giving me the chance to say a word for myself. Now, if you'd let me alone, it would have been bad enough—these days, when they're all out of a job—the best of them. But that wasn't enough for *you*. You'd got to chase me; you'd got to blacklist me all over the section. What chance did I have to get work around here? You know damn well I didn't have any.

"I didn't ask you for any favours; I only asked you for a show. And you'd a give it to me? You chased me up and down the country like a mad-dog—for a bad character. You knew a lot about it, you did! But you sit there now and think you proved it because I got to drinkin'. That's a hell of a proof, that is, against a man fixed like me—thrown out, busted—by yourself."

"How about blackmail?" suggested the manufacturer.

"Yaas," snarled the man, "it was a wonder I took that up, wasn't it? after all you've done for me? You ruined me, by God, and the girl I was goin' to be married to; you broke my people's heart; and then you set there and holler about blackmail, you——!"

He broke off in a great, black mouthful of curses.

Thorndike scarcely heard him. His mind was intent upon something else. Slowly, warily, under the cover of the desk, his hand was creeping, sliding toward a

certain drawer beside him. The quick eye of the man caught the movement at once. He stood up and grasped in his right hand, the old first stamp of the Mayhew mill—a heavy, awkward, old-fashioned thing—with a jagged base—a formidable weapon in hands like his.

“Never mind about that,” he sneered.

The manufacturer stopped.

“Put your hand down,” he said sharply.

The manufacturer obeyed.

“I hope you listened, to what I was tellin’ you,” said the fellow, fixing his desperate eyes on the dark face across the table.

“I did; what of it?”

“Is there anything you want to say now?”

“Nothing whatever,” said Thorndike.

“You’ve got no proposition to make me?”

“No, nothing,” cried the manufacturer.

He sprang to his feet. Both men stood facing each other. The man’s eyes had focussed themselves on one point in his master’s neck, a small white spot in the dark flesh, a little childhood scar. There, right there—how he had hungered to close his fingers on that spot—all these years. And NOW!

“Well, there’s something *I’ve* got to say,” he cried hoarsely. “You were right—I was a damn fool—to think you would give me anything; that I could beat you at *that* kind of a game.

“But there is something I *can* do.”

He broke out with another great blasphemy; his deep eyes dilated like a wild beast’s.

"I can get something yet! I can pay you what I owe you—now!"

His hand closed on the old Mayhew stamp.

Thorndike understood. His long-fingered hand shot out for the drawer in the desk. The wood was swollen—a little catch somewhere. A scratching of fingers on the wood,—a fumbling—a clutching at the knob.—

CRASH!

The old stamp, hurled with all the power and accuracy of the trained athlete, shot through the few feet of intervening space, and buried one jagged corner in the skull of the manufacturer. In a moment, before the tall figure could pitch sideways to the floor—the murderer was upon him; his fingers in his throat—there, buried beside that little scar on the dark neck, over the finger nails in the warm flesh. Down they came, limp muscles and tense knees, in one confused jar upon the floor!

The minute that they struck, the murderer was up again realising already what had happened from the feeling of the flesh in his hands.

He knew at once what the hoarse breathing meant. He had seen them before—workmen in the factory, tramps on the railroad—those fellows with the crushed skulls; that monotonous sobbing out of life; that last slow, heavy running down of the machinery of the body, already vacant of a soul.

His whole training had prepared him for such a crisis—the old hard school of the nonchalant fatalism of the streets. Not an expression of fear or regret came into his face. Only the twitching of the mus-

cles of the jaws and the deep revengeful stare of the eyes—fixed on the prostrate form.

“Clear the way for old Dan Tucker,
He’s too late to get his supper,
Clear the road for old Dan Tucker,
He’s too late; too late, late, late.”

The fifes of the drum corps were almost up the hill; it was a matter of seconds before they would be here. He moved quickly to the drawer in the desk. Yes, it was there,—the revolver, as he expected. There was a box of cartridges beneath it. He took both; the big window slid silently up again; and he was gone—back through the deep garden, out into the vacant lot behind; away into the black silence of the fields.

Over the crest of the driveway came the music, clear and shrill and open now; the smoking yellow torches of the parade—the Home Market Defenders in their white oilcloth suits,—the Republican Stalwarts, in their gorgeous flannel uniforms—the Father Matthew Society, with their canes—the Hibernians—all classes and political conditions of men, come together to the honour of the master of the mill—the lord of Ellington, the next governor of the state. The hour of triumph had come!

The French band has wailed solemnly through its grotesque travesty of “The Star Spangled Banner.” The murmur and hush of expectancy has fallen on the incongruous assembly, outside the porch—waiting, waiting, waiting, for the appearance of the tall figure at the window.

Inside the sound of hurried rapping beats upon the panels of the locked door; a girl's surprised calling comes into the high room.

"Dad, Dad;" it says, "they've come; they've come. Where are you; where are you?"

Chapter XXIII

THE HUNT

A WOMAN'S voice, vibrant with fear, rang sharply through the house.
“Dad, Dad,” it cried, “what is it? Why don't you let me in?”

Maggie Shea, always present at the household crises—of joy and sorrow; of festival and death, came hurrying in from her work in the dining-room, backed by a frightened huddle of waitresses.

The girl was shaking frantically at the knob of the study door.

“Let me in, Dad; let me in—please, *please*. O, why don't you answer?”

“What is it, Miss Ruth?” the woman asked.

“There's something wrong in here,” she answered wildly. “The door's locked. He won't answer.”

“Let me see,” said Maggie, pushing before her.

“No,” said the girl. “There's something *else*. Listen.

“Can't you hear it? It's like—like *breathing*; somebody breathing.”

White terror stared from her face.

“Wait,” said Maggie Shea. “I'll run around on the porch and see.”

In an instant she was back again.

"I must go," said the girl, seeing her expression.

"No, no; God bliss ye darlin'," the woman said—a great pity in her voice, "You can't go in there now."

She took her in her strong arms, and forced her away. "You'll come with me now, dear," she said.

Outside a disquieting rumour had started; the torches nodded to and fro, a restless movement stirred the stiff oilcloth uniforms of the Home Market Defenders like the wind in the leaves of a late summer cornfield. William Thorndike was sick; William Thorndike had been injured; William Thorndike had been murdered—in his own house, almost before their very eyes.

Some one had stepped to the open window, and seen the horror on the floor. He beckoned speechless to another.

"Some of you men come in here," cried the second, in a hoarse voice.

A group sprang forward.

"Is there a doctor here?" called the speaker, emerging from the window again.

A young Irish medical student hurried out from the ranks of the parade, and disappeared into the room. The stiff procession broke up in confusion—the flaring torches waved wildly here and there over the black crowd; the men pushed up on the piazza; huddled about the openings to the room. A small boy sat staring in big-eyed terror through the front window, his nose flattened against the pane, with the craning crowd behind him! Then the inside blinds were closed.

The group in the room fell back through the open window, the family physician had arrived. The medical student came out with the rest.

"Is he alive yet?" asked a voice.

"No, he just died," said the student in a professional tone; "just about two minutes ago.

"His head was crushed," he said again, "with a kind of a stamp. It must have been done within ten minutes."

William Thorndike was certainly dead then—murdered. But why? The window was found open; that showed how the man had gone. But they said, so far as anyone could see nothing had been taken. Then why was it done? Who did it?

A small boy stood, tense with excitement, in the middle of a group on the edge of the crowd, pointing back through the yard and talking loud and shrilly. "I know who done it," he stammered, "It was Black Jack Carney, I saw him; I saw him, when I come up ahead of the parade. He ran out just before you got here—like this. And then he went out through—right here—"

"Look here," called somebody, "this boy saw him."

The child crouched down and pointed with exact precision to the place where the man had disappeared. Later under the stare of the gathering crowd, he became a little confused. But he still held to his main story.

The insanity of the mob seized the crowd. John Carney, that worthless vagabond, that thief—that murderer! Men swore revenge in thick oaths. Sev-

eral young fellows ran forward on the way he had taken.

"Look out for him," cried a voice, "He's got a revolver."

"That's all right, by God," one answered, "he won't shoot *me*."

Some sane person in the mass interposed.

"Come back here," he shouted, "half the town will be blowin' each other's heads off in the dark, if you go off that way. Let's organise."

"That's it; let's organise."

"At the town hall at nine o'clock."

The formless crowd went cursing back the way they came. By nine they were at the hall—a fantastic, motley line; a festival gone mad. Men still in their uniforms—the white oilcloth of the Home Market Defenders, the gorgeous red and blue and white of the Stalwarts; the astounding green-plumed hats of the Hibernians, the stiff black Sunday suits and derby hats and thin soled shoes of the various French and Irish societies; armed with what God willed—muzzle loading shot guns, rusty muskets, rickety revolvers; and clubs and axes and even pitchforks. They lined up under the electric lights, with lanterns and the torches of the parade—waiting for the organising and the start.

The railroad had been warned; every freight and passenger train was watched and guarded; that avenue was safe. There was nothing in the Patch; nothing at the man's house; no one but the figure of a silent,

elderly woman, with a meagre shawl about her neck, sitting in the fireless kitchen by the cold light of a small kerosene lamp, her grey head upon her arms, outstretched upon the white, scoured, wood table, and a tall slender girl, with reddish hair, and rigid face, standing over her, taunting them with cruel bitterness for their profitless intrusion on two helpless women.

Then the man-hunt began; a long fall night's work; a night such as the town shall never see again—men abroad, women in their wrappers waiting by the windows; children whimpering in their sleep at the unaccustomed lights. The line went east and south—confusion spreading forward from the town; beating the whole face of the country, woods and fields and swamps and travelled ways. Guards were set upon the roads, messengers on horseback waked the farmers from their stupid sleep; the countryside for miles was alive with armed men; ignorant of firearms, nervous, angry, irresponsible. That no one was killed outright was marvellous; that no one more seriously injured a miracle. One man in the early morning shot himself in the calf with a toy revolver; a tiny flesh wound; one had the clothing on his abdomen wiped away with a great smutty blast of a shotgun, dragged carelessly through the underbush; a half dozen came home with twisted knees and ankles. But still no news of Carney.

John Mayhew was at the police office—a member of the council of war, which was supposed to govern operations. The house officer and he were alone.

The others, elderly men most of them, were either out or had gone to bed. At three o'clock John Heenan came in, preoccupied and silent.

"Any news?" asked Mayhew.

"No."

"How far are they now?"

"Nearly to Starkwater.

"Do you suppose," continued Heenan reflectively, "he could be where we got him that other time—in that old mill?"

"He wouldn't go there again, would he?" commented Mayhew.

"I don't know, he might. He's got to be somewhere. He can't have got away. Those fellows on horseback must have got beyond him. And he isn't here, I know that.

"I believe," concluded Heenan at last, "it's worth trying."

He stepped to the wall and telephoned to a livery.

"Who's going with you?" asked Mayhew.

"I'll go," said the fat house officer.

"You can't," said Heenan.

The little provincial police force, gone frantic with the unusual strain, were running wild through the tenement district—burrowing through the familiar lurking places of the small local criminal—the railroad tracks, the lumber yards, the old sheds. They were all totally inaccessible.

"What's the matter with your coming?" said Heenan, turning to Mayhew.

"Nothing, I suppose," said Mayhew, "that is, if you want me."

"Come on, then," said Heenan. "Take this," he added.

Mayhew slid the big revolver into his pocket, and they went out. Their rig stood waiting—an open buggy; a big, hungry, livery-stable horse, with bare-boned haunches; a great moose-like creature, a devil for the road. They folded the strong smelling robes about them and were off.

The tall horse, with the two silent men behind him, went pounding out on the road; beyond the zone of empty streets, with their alternating bars of darkness and cold electric lights, to the black country beyond. They passed a picket well out on the way to Starkwater—a dark figure, appearing from the side of the road, who held them up with a shotgun.

He knew nothing new about Carney. Somebody had thought they saw him, but he guessed not, he guessed it was only one of the other fellows. They passed the beating line—torches and lanterns moving up and down among the trees; an occasional shout from one to another. Then they headed through the darkness to the mill. Up above, lights in the big old house showed that Adoniram Pitkin was awake. Below it was all dark—the little huddle of vacant houses, the bare hulk of the factories against the sky. They hitched the horse by the opening of the wood-path and walked in, Heenan leading.

There was the entrance to the basement; the

rambling cavern underneath the deserted mill; he would be there if anywhere. They groped their way to the rickety door; John Heenan had not even brought a lantern. An intolerable atmosphere of apprehension enveloped them—the ghoulis desolation of a great, looming, deserted building, with who knows what evil in its echoing vacancies; the eternal suspense of the night woods for the city born. They heard the hiss of the water from the leaking dam; across the pond they saw the black hemlocks on the back of the dark hill stand out against the sky.

John Heenan silently opened the old door; the warmer, damper air met them from inside; they stepped into the silent cellar. From a farther corner, near the old wheel pit, came the sound of water dropping on damp earth; beyond it, a lonely cricket crept in here from the fall cold to die, shrieked like a mænad across the close darkness; filling the black silence from wall to dripping wall with painful sound.

They stood a moment on the threshold, the song of the cricket wavered and went on.

They groped a few feet farther on the wall and paused again.

Suddenly the frenziéd cricket stopped. Something certainly moved in there! John Heenan deliberately reached out and struck a match. The rosy light grew in his fingers, illuminating the flooring overhead and the ground beneath, a little island in the darkness; throwing long dim shadows from the wooden floor supports against the faintly glistening walls. There

was something, a black bunch in the corner. Something! Suddenly the mass stood up.

"Drop that, Shaun Carney," cried John Heenan sharply.

"Don't you come in here, John Heenan," snarled the man.

"Don't be a fool, Shaun," said Heenan. "One's enough for to-night."

He touched another match in the flame of the first; with a hiss the dying light revived. Not a muscle in face or body stirred, except that little twitching of his cheek, which always came in times of nervous strain.

"Come now, Shaun," he said in a level voice, "I want you."

The man hesitated; the spot of metal in his hand, shining in the dim light, wavered a moment.

"Come along; come out of there," said Heenan, walking coolly toward him; "it's no use; you couldn't get away now, anyway, if you filled me full of holes."

The desperate man, recognising the futility of the thing; coming again under the old spell of that cold, fearless voice, dropped his arm entirely.

"All right," he said. "Let it go at that."

"Light another match," said Heenan, calling to Mayhew. He did so. The sharp click of the handcuffs came across the cellar.

"Shaun," said Heenan, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

It was not the captor who spoke; but the intimate acquaintance of a lifetime; the older man, placed for

years in the peculiar position of chief of police in a small town; knowing everybody, interested in their lives—a sort of moral godfather to the place.

“Is he dead?” asked Carney.

“Yes.”

The three men walked in silence to the wagon and drove in silence homeward.

The news of the capture spread quickly. As they reached the lockup, a crowd of men returning from the hunt arranged itself in double line between the street and the doorway—pale, ragged, weary, dirty, from their night’s exposure. The great horse pounded up and stopped suddenly at the curbing. The murderer marched out defiantly with John Heenan—the quarry of the hunt, muddy, flushed, dry-mouthed, red-eyed—dragged at last like an animal from a hole.

“Kill him, kill him,” yelled a half-drunken man, from the rear of the gathering.

John Heenan stopped short.

“*You* shut up, Martin Heffernan,” he said pointedly. The small man slunk away.

“Don’t let me hear any more of that,” he said, running his cold, grey eyes across the crowd.

Their feet shuffled down the stone steps into the police office.

“Well,” said Carney looking around, “You’ve got me.

“I don’t give a damn what you do to me.” He went on with a fierce exultation. “I’ve spoiled *him*, by God!”

"You'd better go to bed," said John Heenan to Mayhew.

"I guess you're right," he said.

He laid the revolver on the desk and went out into the pale and watery light of the November sunrise. Now he was gone, that night might well have never been, for all the colour of reality that remained with him, all its occurrences, grotesque, fantastic, horrible, passed before him again, unrealised. It was one of those great crushing blows of fate, which leave us stunned and wondering. Thorndike murdered, Carney better dead; the falling of the tragic crisis of two antagonistic lives—on them and theirs—Ruth Thorndike; the silent girl Kate Desmond!

One figure only stayed with him from all that crowd about the station—the tall young woman in black upon the fringe of the crowd, the white face beneath the reddish hair, the cruel pain upon her lips—standing motionless, clutching at her neck the little shawl that was thrown about her head. If Carney saw her he had not given a sign of it; never once had he turned to one side or the other. As the door closed after him, she had turned with a quick gesture of despair, and walked away, the idle crowd opening silently before her.

Mayhew passed into the silent house. He found a meagre luncheon in the cold and empty kitchen and climbed wearily upstairs to bed and sleep; plunged fathoms deep in the dull, heavy unseasonable sleep of morning.

When he awoke again it was well past noon. His aunt met him as he was coming down the stairs, and handed him a little envelope, addressed to him in a woman's hand. He tore it open. Across the front page of the notepaper four words were written.

"Come to me.

RUTH."

John Mayhew was going to the old house again; up the straight gravelled walk, to the front door. So many memories came to him, so many childish fancies struggling to be reborn; so many faint, accustomed voices clamouring to be heard; so many dim-remembered faces, that rose and faded from his mind again—the white-cheeked mother by her window side; his father, with his haggard face; that figure of the small girl, with the dark unruly hair, and straightforward eyes, and the little foolish skirts that bobbed about the edges of her knees!

And now, most unreal of all! He looked up. There in the second story, in that room with the closed blinds, and lowered shades lay William Thorndike, murdered. He saw it all as if he stood there—the tall dark figure outstretched on the black walnut bed, in the high, melancholy dusk of the great west chamber; the inflexible will, the subtle intelligence, blotted out forever at the height of power; the ruler, the maker and orderer of men's lives, the shaper of new destinies of civilisation—gone down like the most stupid of his workmen into the vast, contemptuous indifference of death. And there below in the long room must be Ruth.

He rang the bell; the servant let him into the familiar hall. O, dearest of all the world to him, there she stood at the centre of the old room, waiting—in desperate grief, in loneliness, in intolerable agony of soul—that brave, straight, slender little figure—already with the sombre garments of her mourning upon her.

She was turned away from him; she had not recognised his whisperings at the door.

He stopped upon the threshold. "Ruth," he said.

She turned like a flash and stared at him.

"You promised me, you know," she said, a little wildly. "If I needed you—you said—"

He went a few steps toward her; their eyes had met again—clearly, fairly, with no faint possibility of misunderstanding. She came to him—hurrying, staggering, her arms outstretched. Her face was on his shoulder; her dear hair against his cheek.

"I needed you so," she sobbed brokenly. "I needed you so; I needed you so."

Chapter XXIV

GOOD NIGHT

ALL this is old to-day—the hope and passion of ten years ago—still strong enough to wake a wistful sigh, perhaps, or passed forever into the pale, level commonplace of memory. The murder of William Thorndike of Ellington—that ten days' horror and shrieking of the newspapers—who shudders now at the old tale? New souls have come whimpering into the world, who knows how many myriad of them; children have grown and loved and married; great men and small have died. A thousand yesterdays, with new emotions of their own, have come and passed; superseding, effacing, obliterating that which went before.

New rulers have arisen here in the valley. Another John Carnochan has come into the iron mills that bear his name. Morgan Black has died—a year and a half ago—died as he should have died—untouched by the least faint suspicion of dotage; in the midst of his vast schemes and enterprises—found dead one morning among the papers in his library; his great fortune remains as his monument, towering and awful in itself, no doubt, but after all, a dull, heavy, inanimate thing, without the great man's soul that vitalised it. A half dozen petty lawyers, dazed with

detail, slave to keep running in the old grooves, the interests he moved hither and thither as he chose.

Another Mayhew rules from the old house on the Hill, the great Mayhew Manufacturing Company. It is an entirely different régime from that which preceded it; a master of entirely different temperament. There are no shadowy recesses in this man's soul from which come forth great, unsuspected, conscienceless purposes and achievements. He is frank, direct, energetic, approachable, intense; still too intense, perhaps. Yet he thinks he has learned his lesson somewhat. To the impatient, excessive, nervous activity of youth, has succeeded something of the philosophy of living of the older man; some understanding—some acquiescence in the painful patience of the slow world forces, which govern us. He has made his working compromises with society; the enthusiasm of the boy has been replaced to some extent by the level determination, the watchful, sober intelligence of the man—less attractive, less self-evident, less spectacular—but not less valuable, or effective, he hopes, but more. Time is already stamping his face with the stamp of the men who accomplish. The rigid lines of care and work are gathering about his nose and mouth; his cheek is thin; his eyes are oftentimes the tired eyes of middle age and business. Yet it would be ridiculous to affect that he does not enjoy it—the responsibility, the sense of successful and useful action, the feeling of accomplishment—that passion of virile manhood, that rough tyrant, giant desire, which overtowers all the gentler emotions that have preceded it.

But there is something beside mere personal ambition which fashions his life—a cause for action that the public does not know. This great industrial fortune, whose management has come to him, has brought its great obligation—greater even than others of its kind. He never considers it without a dull sense of regret and repugnance for the squalor in which this towering growth first found its root; the great, sordid crime at its beginning. He feels that he owes society restitution for this, and more or less consciously he has tried to make it—not by any direct, public act of restoration; it would be difficult, he has found, if not impossible, to make this; the lapse of time, the death of the offenders, the very nature of the offence, a breach of the military regulations of a war passed a generation into history would render the attempt impractical, grotesque, quixotic; as useless as it would be distressing. But in his actual every day relations to society—the problems which lie nearest to him—in the honest conduct of public affairs, in charity and most of all in that inestimably important social relation of a great employer of labour to his employés he has made what reparation he could. He has a debt to pay and he is paying it; and it is a matter of common knowledge with us that he bears himself with less arrogance than his fellows; than is generally expected of a man in his position.

The position he has reached is not by conquest—he realises that. He himself neither pushed to solution the problems society offered him nor forced a personal success from its opposition. Circumstances,

family inheritance; the powerful hand of the dead reaching out of the past—as with most of us, directly or indirectly; by education, by social connection or mere brute material inheritance—has given him the greater share of all he has possessed. Do you imagine that any one man, with his own strength, can overcome the great commercial forces, of which these manufacturers are the embodiment? He does not. He has lived here all his life and watched it, and never yet has he seen a man entirely successful in the unequal fight against such an opponent as his was.

The great figure of William Thorndike has already dimmed and dwindled in the perspective of ten years. But John Mayhew himself does not forget it or underestimate it. He often thinks—as he does to-night—of this man who came before him. If he has had his own small successes; if, as he has been told, he has managed the big property with unusual intelligence; if the business has even grown considerably beneath his hand; still he understands himself, as no one else can do, that he cannot be all that his predecessor was—a born ruler of industry, a builder of great enterprises, a compeller of men and forces—coldly and unscrupulously great. He understands him better now, his circumstances, his mental attitude, his difficulties, his angers, all his ways. He still can hear his high and scornful impatience of his enemies—his old characteristic remarks.

“When you make an employé, you make an enemy,” he says in his dry hard voice.

And again: “Any theorist can run a mill;” of

course anyone can manage a great business; can understand the vast world movements that bring dull or active trade; can plan the course of a community decades ahead, can predict long months in advance the alternate feasts and famines, through which our crude and semi-barbarous civilisation still gluts or starves itself. Any little bleating theorist can do this—in retrospect.

All these things William Thorndike did—with his great mistakes, of course, like other men, his great cruelties, perhaps, but with his undoubted success, whose proofs stood all about him, gross and material, to the senses of the most animal—these great piles of brick and stone, this very community itself. He realises that he himself can never hope for so great accomplishment.

Yet—he says in his heart sometimes—there is one thing where he excels the greater figure who has gone—the appreciation of the whole situation, a greater understanding of both sides. There are certainly two sides to this eternal controversy between the employer and the employé—even in that brutal murder in his room—(how often he has seen his young wife flinch on entering here, when she did not know his eyes were on her)—even in that. That criminal who paid the price ten long years ago, stolid and alone, amid the curses and cat-calls of a state—there was little enough to plead for him before the law; yet in the great human equities he had his own strong, moving plea.

“All I ask for is a show—” he hears him say it now, his sullen blue eyes fixed upon the distance. It

seems to him a crude but valid expression of the keynote of the situation. These shabby, silent fellows, with their heads down, who pour out of the mills at night—a sluggish, weary stream; these dark figures slanting unprotected out against the rain; these girls with their poor, tawdry ornaments; these tired women with their hoods and little shawls—grey, sexless beings, sunk by the last bounds of femininity, beyond the last pathetic, wistful, foolish appeal of millinery to the woman's heart. Do you think these people get their share of the production of civilisation? You know they do not. They might have ten times as much, and you have none the less—but more! Around you on every hand lie the proofs of the crudity and semi-barbarousness of our civilisation. We have not come so very far yet, on our road—in spite of all our boasts—the cheap shouting of our orators, the bland and solemn self-appreciation of the fat leaders of our inherited ethical and spiritual belief.

“We haven't asked for alms, nor favours,” those weary figures say. “All we ask for is our show. And we are going to have it. Sometime, some way, sooner or later, we shall have our privileges and our honest rights; and all your tricking and cheating and class legislation and juggling will not avail you. We are the strongest in the end; the great tendency of men's affairs swings toward us. If you do not play this little game of life with fairness; if you do not pay us honestly what we have won; we ourselves will come and take it—and so much the worse for your children and your grandchildren!”

All this was true—and more—but yet the other side! Say these things had never been; say these little principalities and towns had never been built up; say these baron manufacturers had not set their walls within our valleys or flung their smoky banners wide across our fields; say this ragged pageant never shuffled down our evening streets—that the Irish had remained in their poor little farms, the Frenchmen in the fierce and empty northern woods, the Poles in their black European hovels—starving agrarian peasants, sunken in poverty and old servitude—would they or all mankind be better off than now? Man's whole advance has been but trifling, indeed; but no mere foolish sentimental pessimism should underestimate the accomplishment of this last half century.

A new sound has come into the land these last few years—the voice of the little *à priori* thinker, with his tinsel, ready-made universe, formed in a night from the discarded timber of a hundred familiar systems of the working philosophers of a century; the cry of the bearded apostle of the future, a strange new hybrid of a prophet and a walking delegate; an inventor of another new Utopia, wailing in the market place because mankind refuses all at once to step aboard his new flying machine, and be whisked away across the yawning precipices of the unknown to regions of ineffable bliss. All these things have their places in the great economy of nature, no doubt,—a bare-headed socialist calling beneath the electric light across the half deserted street; a religious sentimentalist ha-

ranging his weekly parcel of old maids in the resounding vestry of a church; a pismire shouting from his blade of grass for a fixed star to change its course. Meanwhile society moves on in its great orbit. Compromise succeeds compromise, one little gain another—new conditions, new privileges, new generations, better, more intelligent than the old; new inventions, changing the whole face of continents; society working out its vast experiments—in the great cities, in these hundred towns and villages of ours—the tremendous laboratories of the experience of mankind, forming slowly, painfully, but magnificently, the new order of things under our very eyes. Do we raise up prophets who can foresee through this vast complexity of forces a certain future? You know we do not.

For a century and a half, especially here in New England, we have been damned with clammy sentimentality; all our thinking reeking with sentimental rot—political, social, religious. Come out for once, into the open and meet this thing like men. Great social wrongs exist, you know it. But classes do exist also—distinctions in men—of brain capacity, of race inheritance, of individual power—and always will under any system conceivable, so long as man is man. You know that, too. But there surely is no difficulty from that standpoint. This is the day of work and experiment. There are a hundred and a thousand things for you to do and change to-day—not fanciful experiments; real injustices to be righted, real dangers

to be met—honestly and fairly. The world to-day makes but one demand on every man, no matter who he is—fairness and work. Fairness and work.—

A slender hand has fallen upon John Mayhew's hair.

"What are you dreaming about now?" a voice asks, and does not wait an answer.

"It's getting late, dear," it says to him. "You'll have to be up early in the morning, you know, to take that first train to New York."

One day is gone; across the night the work of one to come commands him!

He turns—and looks again into the kind eyes of the woman he loves.

THE END

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